ACCESS TO HOUSING
ACCÈS AU LOGEMENT

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The Canadian Housing and Renewal Association

L'Association canadienne d'habitation et de rénovation urbaine

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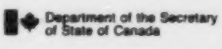

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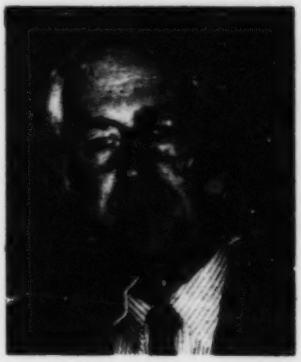
INTRODUCTION

by/par
Jean Pelletier
Mayor/Maire, City of/Ville de Québec



Housing policies are experiencing major changes owing to major budget decisions by the federal government. In 1978, Quebec City created a Standing Committee on Housing and put housing at the top of its priorities.

For us, access to adequate housing is a social duty. In the long Canadian tradition of developing a global social policy, the time has come to include housing in our priorities — and this is exactly what we have been doing in Quebec City for the past 12 years. We have tried to provide all our citizens with a decent life. Quebec City, which has been involved in neighbourhood revitalization for some time, adopted a master plan and a housing policy that were both the result of wide-ranging consultation.

This policy is based on two major orientations: maintaining good housing conditions and developing the residential stock. Since Quebec City is a very old city, special attention has been given to recycling the existing housing stock. On the other hand, we did not want our housing infrastructure to be based only on the past, so we also had to provide our share of new residential construction.

Therefore, the protection of the existing housing stock is a priority for our city, a priority reflected in neighbourhood improvement programs and an involvement in residential renovation programs. The increase in the housing stock was

Les politiques de logement subissent des changements profonds en raison des décisions budgétaires prises par le gouvernement fédéral. En 1978, la Ville de Québec a mis sur pied le Comité permanent de l'habitation et a placé le logement à la tête de ses priorités.

Pour nous, l'accès à un logement convenable est un devoir moral. Dans la longue tradition canadienne d'élaboration d'une politique sociale globale, le moment est venu d'inclure le logement dans nos priorités — et c'est exactement ce que nous avons fait à Québec depuis les douze dernières années. Nous avons essayé d'offrir à tous nos citoyens une vie décente. La Ville de Québec, qui depuis longtemps est engagée dans la revalorisation urbaine, a adopté un plan directeur et une politique de logement qui toutes deux sont le produit d'une vaste consultation.

Cette politique s'articule autour de deux grandes orientations: le maintien de bonnes conditions de logement et le développement du parc résidentiel. Québec ayant un vieux tissu urbain, nous devions accorder une attention particulière au recyclage du stock de logements existants. Par ailleurs, ne voulant pas que notre infrastructure immobilière repose uniquement sur le passé, il nous fallait aussi fournir notre juste part de construction résidentielle nouvelle.

La protection du stock de logement existant constitue

"The years ahead do not portend well for the issue of access to housing."

«Les années à venir augurent mal pour l'accessibilité au logement».

encouraged in order to meet the demand and to ensure that the city maintained its importance as a major regional centre. We have also insisted on the importance of improving the environment because it is the best guarantee to ensure the survival of older neighbourhoods. If you walk around the city, you will find that our old neighbourhoods are a very important part of our urban tissue. You will also see that our older neighbourhoods, while keeping their proud figures of the past, are still in excellent condition.

The city has also helped to increase the number of subsidized units, including public housing, co-operative, non-profit and, more recently, rent supplement. Today, Quebec City, with a population of 165,000, has a subsidized housing stock that totals 7,500 units.

In its efforts to reach its objectives, the city has always co-operated closely with the federal and provincial governments. In addition, Quebec City has created municipal programs to help meet specific problems not covered by the joint programs. When a core program offered to municipalities jointly by the federal and provincial governments did not meet exactly our needs for specific problems, we never hesitated to enter into these programs as a third partner and work at improving them significantly. One example of this is the Neighbourhood Improvement Program, a federal program that would have had no impact in our city if it had not been improved by us.

But what of the future? In my view, the years ahead do not portend well for the issue of access to housing.

donc une priorité pour notre ville, une priorité qui se reflète dans les programmes d'amélioration des quartiers et une participation dans les programmes de restauration domiciliaire. La croissance du parc de logements a été encouragée afin de satisfaire à la demande et assurer que la ville maintienne son importance à titre de ville-centre. Nous avons également insisté sur l'importance d'améliorer l'environnement parce que c'est la meilleure garantie pour assurer la survie des quartiers anciens. Si vous vous promenez à Québec, vous verrez que nos quartiers anciens sont une part très importante de notre tissu urbain. Vous constaterez aussi que nos quartiers anciens, tout en gardant leur fière allure du passé, sont encore dans un état très satisfaisant.

La ville a aussi contribué à l'augmentation du parc de logements subventionnés, qu'il s'agisse d'habitations à loyer modique, de coopératives d'habitation, de logements d'organismes sans but lucratif et, plus récemment, de supplément au loyer. Aujourd'hui, la Ville de Québec, avec une population de 165 000 habitants, compte environ 7 500 logements subventionnés.

Dans ses efforts pour atteindre ses objectifs, la ville a toujours collaboré étroitement avec les gouvernements fédéral et provincial. De plus, la Ville de Québec a mis sur pied des programmes municipaux pour permettre de satisfaire des besoins précis qui n'étaient pas couverts par les programmes conjoints. Lorsqu'un programme de base offert aux municipalités conjointement par les gouvernements fédéral et provincial ne répondait pas parfaitement à nos besoins,

Public funds for housing will be even more scarce and will be distributed more sparingly.

We are going to have to define our priorities and specify the needs that will have to be met. In particular, the housing of senior citizens, who are becoming an increasingly significant part of the population, will present a major challenge because of the special services — in addition to housing — that have to be provided. Smaller households reflect the breaking-up of family ties, in particular, the increase in single-parent families and roomers, whose economic conditions are precarious.

The deinstitutionalization process is also adding to the number of citizens experiencing difficulty in finding housing. For all these client groups it will be necessary to provide not only shelter but also services and support, and to help them socially rehabilitate and regain independence.

Residential renovation was a target of the last federal budget. Rental RRAP was eliminated. In Quebec City, where 90 per cent of the subsidies granted through RRAP are earmarked for the Rental RRAP component, the impact of these cuts on renovation activities in the city will be devastating. The elimination of Rental RRAP for a city such as Quebec is a tragedy.

Since the accession to power of the Mulroney government, housing programs have ceased to be housing programs aimed at supporting property. They have become social programs. Yet, even with this new philosophy, the program component of RRAP, which is aimed at tenants, has been eliminated. This is

nous n'avons jamais hésité à participer à ces programmes à titre de troisième partenaire en les bonifiant de façon importante. Je cite à titre d'exemple le Programme d'amélioration des quartiers, un programme fédéral qui n'aurait eu aucun effet dans notre ville si nous ne l'avions bonifié.

Mais que nous réserve l'avenir? À mon avis, les années à venir augurent mal pour l'accessibilité au logement. Les fonds publics destinés au logement seront encore plus rares et seront distribués avec encore plus de parcimonie.

Nous devrons définir nos priorités et préciser les besoins qu'il faudra satisfaire. En particulier, le logement pour les personnes âgées, qui constituent une part croissante de la population, présentera un défi de taille en raison des services spécialisés qui, en plus du logement, devront être fournis. La réduction de la taille des ménages reflète l'éclatement des liens familiaux, en particulier l'augmentation des familles monoparentales et des chambreurs, qui vivent dans des conditions économiques précaires.

Le processus de désinstitutionnalisation vient aussi augmenter le nombre de citoyens ayant des difficultés à se loger. Pour toutes ces clientèles il faudra non seulement prévoir un toit, mais aussi des services et un soutien de façon à leur permettre de réintégrer la société et regagner leur autonomie.

La restauration domiciliaire a été une des cibles du dernier budget fédéral, qui a éliminé le volet locatif du PAREL. Dans la Ville de Québec, où 90 pour cent des subventions versées dans le cadre du PAREL sont consacrées au volet locatif du programme, ces compressions sur les

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«Le meilleur moyen pour donner aux citoyens un certain contrôle sur leurs conditions de logement est de les rendre propriétaires du logement qu'ils habitent».

bad news in Quebec City, where tenants constitute a majority and their means of existence are precarious.

Financial access to housing continues to be a source of concern in a city where a significant proportion of the population lives below the poverty level. In this respect, we are calling for the creation of a housing allocation program that would help people pay their rent directly. We believe it is the most economical way of providing housing to those who cannot afford to pay rent with their own resources.

We must respect all our citizens, thereby allowing them to become anonymous in the urban tissue. This goes for even those who receive public assistance for housing. Let's stop putting them in buildings clearly identified for the poor; let's start respecting their individuality. We will give them a cheque, and then they will choose where they want to live. Not only will they have less the impression of being second-class citizens in their own country but also, economically, I am convinced this approach will cost less.

The issue of housing allocations has been on my party's program for 12 years, and it is my hope that the federal, provincial, and municipal governments will gradually move in a similar direction.

In addition to programs aimed at helping the needy, governments will have to address the problems that major centres are experiencing in the area of infrastructure renewal and community equipment, which go hand in hand

activités de restauration auront une effet dévastateur. Pour une ville comme Québec, l'élimination du volet locatif du PAREL est une tragédie.

Depuis l'arrivée au pouvoir du gouvernement Mulroney, les programmes de logement ont cessé d'être des programmes de soutien à l'immobilier. Ils sont devenus des programmes sociaux. Et même aujourd'hui, avec cette nouvelle philosophie, le gouvernement élimine le volet qui touche les locataires. C'est une mauvaise nouvelle pour la Ville de Québec, où les locataires sont majoritaires et leurs moyens d'existence sont précaires.

L'accessibilité financière au logement continue d'être une source de préoccupation dans une ville qui regroupe une proportion importante de citoyens vivant sous le seuil de la pauvreté. À cet égard, nous souhaitons la mise sur pied d'un programme d'allocations au logement qui permettrait d'aider directement les personnes à payer le coût de leur logement. Nous croyons qu'il s'agit du moyen le plus économique de fournir un logement à ceux qui ne peuvent en payer le coût avec leurs propres ressources.

Nous devons respecter tous nos citoyens en leur permettant de demeurer anonymes dans le tissu urbain, même s'ils reçoivent une aide publique pour le logement. Cessons de les entasser dans des immeubles clairement identifiés pour les pauvres et respectons leur individualité. Donnons-leur un chèque et ils pourront choisir où ils veulent vivre. Non seulement auront-ils moins

with the rehabilitation of the old residential stock. If urban renewal is to be effective, it must address all the elements of infrastructure simultaneously. Otherwise, even if significant funds are allocated, urban renewal will not yield the expected results.

Access to housing will continue to be an important objective because the best way for citizens to have any control over their housing conditions is to make them owners of the buildings in which they live.

The coming years will pose a great challenge for politicians and planners, who will have to find solutions to these ever-increasing needs on limited resources. Municipalities cannot replace federal and provincial governments, even if it is clearly the intention of the federal government to pass along part of the cost to municipalities. The involvement of the two senior levels of government remains absolutely essential if adequate housing is to be made available for everyone.

l'impression d'être des citoyens de deuxième classe dans leur propre pays, mais aussi je suis convaincu que cette approche sera moins coûteuse au plan économique.

La question des allocations au logement figure au programme de mon parti depuis douze ans et j'espère que les gouvernements fédéral, provincial et municipaux orienteront graduellement leurs politiques dans cette direction.

Outre les programmes destinés à aider les plus démunis, les gouvernements devront faire face aux problèmes qui connaissent les villes-centres au niveau de la réfection des infrastructures et des équipements collectifs, qui vont de pair avec la remise en état du parc résidential ancien. Pour que la rénovation urbaine soit efficace, il faut s'attaquer à tous les éléments d'infrastructure en même temps. Autrement, même si on affecte suffisamment de fonds, la rénovation urbaine ne donnera pas les résultats escomptés.

L'accession à la propriété continuera d'être un objectif important parce que le meilleur moyen pour donner aux citoyens un certain contrôle sur leurs conditions de logement est de les rendre propriétaires du logement qu'ils habitent.

Les prochaines années constitueront un défi majeur pour les élus et les planificateurs, qui devront trouver des solutions à ces besoins croissants avec des ressources réduites. Les municipalités ne pourront se substituer aux gouvernements fédéral et provincial, même si c'est l'intention du gouvernement fédéral de faire passer une part des coûts aux municipalités. La participation des deux niveaux supérieurs de gouvernement demeure absolument essentielle si on veut que chaque citoyen ait accès à un logement convenable.

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ACCESS TO HOUSING
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Paul Angers (Chair)
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Jim Green
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Assistant to the Executive Director
Les oeuvres de la Maison du Père, and
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Enrique Ortiz
Executive Secretary
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Mexico City

None would dispute the human race's inalienable right to decent accommodation. Housing rights are linked closely to the rights of life, health, work, participation, quality of the environment, privacy, and property. Although speaking from different perspectives and for different populations, all three speakers stressed the absolute right of groups or communities to make their needs known, even if that means creating "an army."

Personne ne peut nier le droit inaliénable de la race humaine à un hébergement convenable. Le droit au logement est étroitement lié au droit à la vie, à la santé, au travail, à la participation, à la qualité de l'environnement, à l'intimité et à la propriété. Même si leurs perspectives et les populations au nom desquelles ils parlaient étaient différentes, les trois conférenciers ont insisté sur le droit absolu des groupes ou des communautés à faire connaître leurs besoins, même s'il faut pour cela créer «une armée». Ils ont dit qu'il fallait absolument que les individus ou les organisations fassent preuve de solidarité et démontrent leur volonté d'agir.

Access to housing is more fundamental than any other in housing, especially when we know that over one million Canadian households are experiencing serious difficulties in finding adequate and affordable housing," said Paul Angers, vice-president of operations for the Société d'habitation du Québec, when opening the session on *Access to Housing*.

He went on to say that the challenge of the '90s is filled with new elements because we are dealing with new client groups. There are the problems faced by our senior citizens, who represent more than 10 per cent of the Canadian population. There are the problems faced by non-family households, which include one person or several people without family ties. There are the problems faced by the homeless. And then there are the problems faced by single-parent families, who have more problems than any other group in finding adequate housing.

Jim Green, housing co-ordinator of the Downtown Eastside Residents' Association (DERA) in Vancouver, B.C., suggested to the audience that the whole issue of housing as a right should not be addressed as a philosophical or theoretical question but as a practical one that is unquestionably linked to the right to life, happiness, and health.

Along with these other practical and inalienable rights, believes Green, is the right to belong to a community. At the geographic heart of Vancouver on a half-mile-wide peninsula of land sandwiched between two bodies of water is the Downtown Eastside. Until 1973, when the Downtown Eastside Residents' Association

was founded and gave the area its official name, the spit of land was considered to be "skid row." Although the moniker has all but disappeared, the area still does not appear on community maps.

Membership in DERA requires residency in the area, making this grass-roots, rank-and-file organization the true voice of the community. The strong sense of community spirit that has arisen as residents fight together for improved living conditions and the preservation of their neighbourhood from the jaws of huge and powerful corporations and their construction projects has served to unite the Downtown Eastside residents who, according to Green, "are among the proudest people in the city."

This strong sense of community prevails despite the wretched living conditions of the majority of the area residents. "The average person in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver," said Green, "is a single, elderly male of 55 years of age or over. He has a 50 per cent probability of being disabled; his income is about $425 per month; and his 10-foot by 10-foot hotel room costs an average of $275 per month. He has no cooking facilities in his room and has to find another way to eat."

Although many people think of low-income communities as transient in nature, the Downtown Eastside is concrete proof that this is not true. According to Green, the average person in the Downtown Eastside has lived in the community for 15 years. "This makes ours the most stable community in the city."

Defined by the United Nations as homeless because of their lack of security of tenure, Downtown Eastside residents can be evicted from their rooms for any reason at any time, day or night, without notice. Hotel owners can deny tenants the right to guests or visitors and can raise rents at will, by any amount. Green himself has seen rents go up 600 per cent in one day. "Our residents are living in a desperate situation," he said, "and there are about 10,000 people living in our community."

In direct contrast to the issue of housing as an inalienable right, said Green, are the contradictory questions, do we have the right to speculate on housing? and is housing a commodity? "Unfortunately, at least in Vancouver at the present time, housing as a commodity is winning out over housing as a right."

With the announcement of the the EXPO '86 site in 1981, DERA began lobbying the government for protection against the mass evictions that resulted in other cities where world fairs and expositions had been held. Local officials promised the organization that people would not lose their homes since their right to housing had to be protected and respected. But no mechanisms were in place to guarantee that protection.

Unfortunately, what spoke more powerfully than anything else at that time, said Green, was the almighty dollar. And the dollars looked very big indeed to hotel owners. DERA tried vainly to work out compromises with the owners. In 1986, despite DERA's efforts to prevent the mass eviction of Downtown Eastside residents, between 200 and 1,000 people, at an average age of 74 years, lost their homes to make more room for tourists visiting Expo '86.

Residents were given only a few hours' notice and in almost all cases were evicted on the third or fourth of the month without any payment of back-rent. Within six weeks of the evictions, at least 11 of the evictees had died.

The unfortunate reality, said Green, is that "the right to speculate, the right to make profit off other people, is much greater in this country at the present time than the right to housing."

"Over one million Canadian households are experiencing serious difficulties in finding adequate and affordable housing."

"By being involved in the design and operation of their own housing, people learn new skills and new democratic structures. In this way, housing incorporates a whole process of individual human development."

"And it's not just people losing their homes; it's tearing a community to shreds. People lose one another, they become ill and enter hospitals, and no one ever knows what happens to them. Community patterns break down. And so the right to housing becomes directly linked to the right to live in a neighbourhood, the right to belong to a community, and the right to maintain friendships."

DERA relocated some 500 of the evicted residents. Of these, said Green, about 26 were placed in social housing units. The rest were placed in rooms where conditions were even more appalling than those they had left behind. Often, people in wheelchairs were relocated on the second or third floors of hotel walk-ups. Many people had to be relocated three and four times as they faced one eviction after another in the wave of Expo-induced hotel shutdowns.

Despite its heavy impact, DERA sees Expo '86 as having been merely the tip of iceberg. With the 1981 announcement of the development of B.C. Place properties — the site of Expo '86 — 2,000 affordable housing units were torn down for parking lots, high-rise office towers, and luxury condos. "We believe," said Green, "that with the mega-projects now surrounding our community, we are in much worse shape than we were with Expo '86 and that, unless we are successful in our struggle, the long-term effects will be the absolute obliteration of our community." (Ironically, what is probably the poorest community in western Canada is surrounded by the largest urban development project in North America.)

For the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, government intervention has become crucial to community survival. Downtown Eastside residents are now attempting to enlighten the Canadian government on the situation in Vancouver and to obtain more social housing.

The answer to the housing problem, said Green, lies not only in putting more dollars into social housing programs but also in the indirect investment that is made in the strength of individuals. "By being involved in the design and operation of their own housing," he said, "by being the planners of their own communities, people learn new skills and new democratic structures and gain the self-confidence and pride that ultimately results in better living conditions."

Better housing, believes Green, boosts the self-confidence and pride of residents as they need no longer feel ashamed of their living conditions. Making the revolutionary move from a hotel room to social housing, he said, is positive proof that things really can get better. With an increased sense of well- being, the resident then takes the next step himself by becoming involved in the preservation and betterment of his community and by helping others escape the bitter reality of their unconscionable living conditions. In this way, the concept of housing actually incorporates a whole process of individual human development.

"I firmly believe in the architecture of opportunity," said Green, "and that is what housing is. It might not be the answer to everything, but it certainly provides people with the opportunity to take other steps."

Although DERA's efforts to improve housing conditions are often met with resistance, the group remains strong. In response to an alderperson who opposed the organization because she felt that in bringing together the residents, DERA was creating an army, not housing, Green said. "She was right. We are creating an army. An army that is trying to change the community for the better."

Sister Monique Picard, assistant to the executive director of Les oeuvres de la Maison du Pére, and a Member of the Order of Canada, told the audience that in Quebec alone one million people are faced with housing problems.

In light of the increasing number of people across Canada who do not have equal access to housing, Picard acknowledged and accepted CHRA President Peter Smith's challenge, as noted in the December 31, 1988, issue of Canadian Housing: "As I reflect upon the recent U.S. and Canadian election campaigns, I am struck by the absence of any debate in either country on the serious questions of homelessness, housing affordability, and neighbourhood revitalization. ... It is up to us within the organization, and without, to challenge myths surrounding those who are homeless, those without decent homes, and those at risk of losing the only shelter they have."

In the '70s, said Picard, governments began instituting neighbourhood improvement programs. "Downtown revitalization, residential renovation, promotion of homeownership, and tax shelters through capital gains exemptions contributed in changing the face of urban centres, as new corporate offices, hotels, transportation networks, and even streets to facilitate access were created." Accompanying this physical change was a fundamental shift in cutural values, all of which, said Picard, enticed thousands of suburban dwellers attracted by renovated houses, condominiums, and proximity both to place of work and cultural activities to return to the city.

At the same time, however, said Picard, governments were gradually backing out of their commitments to social programs that were won earlier through overwhelming public pressure. "In 1979, the federal government was involved in the production of 10,000 public, co-operative, or non-profit housing units in the province of Quebec. By 1986, that figure had dropped to 3,000. Yet, more than 35,000 people in Quebec alone are still on public housing waiting lists."

When will we recognize that the right to adequate, permanent, and affordable housing is essential to the development of individuals in need?

Although the province has taken some small steps in the right direction since the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, steps that have had a marginal impact on the alleviation of the problem, said Picard (including a special program targeted to single or homeless people that produced a few hundred social housing units in Quebec City and Montreal, housing policies that boast a grant improvement program for boarding houses, and the release of land to non-profit organizations), "the concept that the right to adequate, permanent, and affordable housing is essential to the development of individuals in need is not yet generally recognized."

Picard's personal involvement with the homeless dates to the early '70s. "At the time," she said, "I was working at Accueil Bono, a day centre for homeless men in Montreal. I was in contact with landlords or boarding house owners almost every day, trying to find a place for the homeless who came to us." Then, during one particular symposium, a group of people involved with boarding houses rallied together to create the Montreal Boarding House Round Table, the stated objective of which is to assist roomers in the purchase, renovation, and management of their own boarding houses.

Convinced of the need to work together, Picard soon became interested in groups concerned with housing for singles and for

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"The global trends demonstrate a clear process of progressive deterioration of housing conditions in the world. Not a single country has reached the position of offering adequate shelter for all its citizens."

those who are hard to house. Having witnessed the deterioration and disappearance of boarding houses, especially those in the downtown area, these groups responded by creating the first non-profit organizations in the downtown Montreal area to develop stable and affordable housing for the single and needy.

At the time, said Picard, this willing group of non-profit organizations did not realize the enormity of the task confronting them. "The bureaucratic slowness inherent to government grant programs forced them to work for many years at a pace reminiscent of the 19th century, while the speculative market was converting boarding houses into condominiums and luxury boutiques with the efficiency of modern entrepreneurship."

Combined with this snail's-pace progress was an endless search for suitable buildings, multitudinous meetings with various levels of government, funding campaigns, work supervision, and the relocation and rehabilitation of residents. "The overall result," said Picard, "was the generation of a few housing units and a group of tired people who could not devote enough time to their primary objective — providing assistance to roomers."

The fatal flaw in the organizational structure of these non-profit organizations was their failure to work in concert to achieve their goals. "One organization, Chambres en Fleurs," said Picard, "worked extremely hard but alone, over a seven-year-period, to provide 26 new units for roomers. Seven years of co-operation between the community and the different levels of government, on the other hand, produced 600 social housing units in Montreal's Linton Park."

Continued partnership and co-operation are essential to ensure progress in this area, Picard told the audience. "The work of non-profit organizations does not end with the delivery of units. The integration of roomers and building management, as well as continuing assistance from specialized practitioners, are critical components in the support of a group of people who are faced with mental health, alcoholism, or drug abuse problems."

Montreal's pioneering non-profit organizations could not afford this kind of follow-up. Unfortunately, said Picard, the result was that the most needy were excluded from these first projects. "It is now clear that advocating the right to housing, creating projects, and working with residents are three major tasks for social workers. Creating stable housing is essential if these people are to become less dependent on community emergency assistance. Given the diversity of target groups and the lack of support provided by existing housing programs, however, social workers are often faced with a tremendous challenge. As a result, co-ordination with public practitioners is critical for those working in the field."

In this regard, Picard called for the reinstatement of an inter-departmental committee that was created by the Government of Quebec to coincide with the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless.

According to Picard, a recent City of Montreal Department of Housing and Urban Development report, initiated by the city's Advisory Council on Homelessness and entitled Low-Income Singles and the Homeless: Housing Problems, describes this group of people as being one of Montreal's most vulnerable in terms of housing. With regard to the fluctuating character of homelessness, the report also identifies these people as being in a continuously precarious situation. In light of the identification of this group's problems as both significant and serious, it is hoped that this study will be a first step in developing and implementing solutions and that it will be followed by concrete

actions based on co-operation between municipalities, governments, and organizations who are involved with the homeless.

The report indicates that housing solutions for low-income people must be based on a recognition of the diversity and complexity of the problems, said Picard, whether they are due to a lack of affordable housing or to factors that go beyond municipal jurisdiction, such as social and medical support services, the unemployment rate, and minimum wage.

"The magnitude and the nature of the needs identified calls for diversified actions and solutions. The responsibility for housing low-income singles is a societal problem; only a global approach and co-operative action from all those involved — private and community organizations, the federal and provincial governments, and the City of Montreal — will provide adequate and lasting solutions."

A very few new models of social and community management for boarding houses and other types of long-term housing that promote acceptance of hard-to-house groups are under way in Montreal and Quebec. "What is interesting in these projects," said Picard, "is the acceptance of people who would otherwise be excluded from permanent housing — people who would be left on the street or in temporary shelters because of a lack of resources. In fact, this type of environment offers internal and external support adapted to the special needs of these people."

Although low-income singles are not all homeless, they are the most likely group to experience housing problems that might ultimately lead to homelessness, said Picard. According to Statistics Canada, single people living alone in Montreal represent 58 per cent of rental households that pay more than 50 per cent of their income for housing. "In Montreal," she said, "living alone is associated with poverty. Just over 54 per cent of singles are in the low-income bracket, compared with 26 per cent of families."

Access to major government housing assistance programs is limited for singles under 60 years of age, said Picard. "In allocating public housing units, priority is given to families and senior citizens. The "Logirente" housing program is designed for people 60 years of age and upwards. In these conditions, it is not surprising that the clientele of emergency shelters is almost exclusively composed of younger singles."

The housing committee of Montreal's Single and Homeless Assistance Network deals primarily with housing problems related to singles and people who are difficult to house. After examining the City of Montreal's Housing Policy Statement from this perspective (having studied the problems experienced by these people in terms of access to housing, relocation in the event of major renovation, housing costs, access to community services, housing standards, etc.), the committee issued recommendations regarding proposed measures for this target group. In its response to this statement, the network emphasized that essential to the recognizition of the right to adequate, secure, and permanent housing for low-income singles is a political will that is not yet in existance.

"This is the first step that governments have to take," said Picard. "Afterwards, the development of housing programs designed for these people will become a social and community responsibility. As in social assistance and health care services, the development of a global housing policy must be based on the right to housing. Housing must be an integral part of social policies."

Because the political will to do this is not yet perceived, said Picard, we must continue to seek short-term corrective measures.

"The development of a global housing policy must be based on the right to housing. Housing must be an integral part of social policies."

"Non-profit organizations must have adequate budgets to hire extra staff in support of low-income singles and people who are difficult to house. Providing permanent shelter to these people will be made possible only if they are supported individually and collectively. The social responsibility for helping these people cannot be assumed solely by charitable organizations; it requires co-operation from all parties involved, as well as from political leaders."

In closing, Picard reminded the audience that the right to housing is an integral part of the Charter of Rights — which Canada has already endorsed. "Social housing must be a priority for all levels of government. The problem of gaining access for the hard to house is widespread, and we must not rely on charitable organizations to solve it. We must act before we experience the housing crisis that prevails in major urban centres in the United States. The U.S. government's withdrawal in funding social housing programs has already had a serious social impact. Let us not repeat the same mistakes in Canada. Housing for low-income singles is a societal problem; only a global approach and co-operation from all involved can produce adequate and lasting solutions."

Following and expanding on Sister Picard's global line of thought, Enrique Ortiz, executive secretary of the Habitat International Coalition (HIC) in Mexico City, Mexico, told the audience that "housing rights as social and economic rights are difficult to define and more difficult to implement, a problem that is reinforced by the attitudes of conservative politicians who do not consider housing a right at all."

"Not a single country offers adequate shelter for all of its citizens."

Despite the fact that all nations are consequently faced with housing problems, said Ortiz, "the contexts in which housing problems are manifested, and therefore the contexts for their solutions, are different in developed and developing countries."

According to Ortiz, developing countries face formidable challenges and strains, including urbanization, an unfavourable international economy, runaway inflation, huge population increases, spiralling unemployment, stagnation in their per capita gross national products, and high levels of external debt. "A particular problem facing developing countries is posed by the large number of homeless and of those living in extremely poor shelter and unhealthy neighbourhoods, whether in urban slums and squatter areas or in poor rural areas."

For different reasons, developed countries, too, are currently facing a growing homelessness problem. Among these are such factors as the breakdown of the extended family, inflexible and expensive government-sponsored housing, and inadequate housing programs.

These immense and different problems, emphasized Ortiz, are clearly responsible for "almost one-quarter of all humanity" being either homeless or living in precarious housing conditions.

"The global trends demonstrate a clear process of progressive deterioration of housing conditions in the world," he said. "Not a single country has reached the position of offering adequate shelter for all its citizens."

As with the other speakers, Ortiz is concerned about the destruction of lower-rent-housing communities and believes that communities have the power, when working collectively, to make changes in government policies. "Governments must create access to the necessary material and non-material resources (e.g., information) that are required for the exercise of power by people in the housing process. Housing must be declared a public policy priority, and adequate financial, physical, institutional, and

human resources must be allocated so as to never compromise this right. International organizations must defend the right to housing," he said.

Since any human right implies a social obligation and, in the case of housing, since governments are the only entities possessing the resources to face this problem on a large scale, said Ortiz, they are often reluctant to make innovative moves into this very costly area. He stressed, however, that government intervention is requisite to ending the global housing crisis. "Because governments are the only entities in possession of adequate resources, the main responsibility in the implementation of the right to housing must be in their hands."

Since governments are slow to move in the implementation of housing rights, despite the fact that the problem is rapidly growing, Ortiz, too, feels communities must organize to pressure government to take action. To best accomplish this task, he said, the "struggle is starting to be conducted by social movements, grass-roots organizations, and non-government organizations. Campaigns and policies that forge the necessary links between communities and governments must be initiated."

To improve housing around the world, Ortiz believes there are certain things for which governments, the international community, and individuals are responsible. Governments must, he said, "protect the different stages of the housing process in national constitutions, statutes, and laws; remove legal, administrative, social, and fiscal obstacles; introduce urban and building codes that are appropriate to the situation of the poor; and incorporate multiple modes of housing production to accommodate the varying needs, traditions, and capabilities of different people. Housing must be declared a public policy priority, and adequate financial, physical, institutional, and human resources must be allocated so as never to compromise this right."

"Housing as a right should never be compromised."

Social organizations all over the world have been fighting to establish housing as a right, said Ortiz, allocating human and economic resources in accordance with their capacities and participating in the collective activities the housing process demands. At the same time, they share an understanding that housing is not only the responsibility of the people but of governments and other official organizations at the national and international levels. "As a result of these struggles, an enabling and participatory approach is now pushing its way into the agendas of housing policy."

It is the obligation of the international community (political bodies, multi-lateral aid agencies, and other human rights bodies) to defend the right to housing and ensure international development policies that fulfil it are developed. Ortiz said these organizations must "ensure the international economic, political, and social system allows all people to enjoy the right to housing; avoid putting political or financial pressures on particular governments to incur external debt and to re-align social policies to repay such a debt; provide adequate resources to states that are hosting refugees or internationally displaced persons; and prohibit private enterprises from displacing people from their housing."

Individuals, said Ortiz, must "engage in the confrontations essential to securing, defending, and sustaining the right to housing; hold national and international bodies accountable for their actions regarding housing rights at local, national, and global levels; and build an international movement around housing."

Ortiz believes people themselves can solve much of the housing problem. Speaking from a global perspective, he told the

audience that "housing rights can ultimately only be enforced by recognizing the heroic efforts of people to establish dignified environments, working with the means at hand and through the concerted efforts of institutions and organizations that can support these struggles, including political movements, universities, churches, and community-based and non-government organizations."

Echoing the thoughts of both Green and Picard, Ortiz emphasized in conclusion that commitment to and participation in the improvement of housing does not rest solely with individuals. "Governments and official agencies have to meet their responsibilities and obligations in solving this major world problem, and links have to be forged between them and the communities they serve."

USING THE LAW
LE DROIT JURIDIQUE AU LOGEMENT

Bruce Porter (Chair)
Co-ordinator
Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation
Toronto, Ontario

Muriel Garon
Commission des Droits de la Personne du Québec

Ruth Pilote
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Rob Herman
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Susannah Worth Rowley
Barrister and Solicitor
Halifax, Nova Scotia

In opening the session on *Using the Law*, the chair, Bruce Porter, began by differentiating between the two components of a human rights complaint. In the housing context, said Porter, Co-ordinator for the Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation in Toronto, the complainant — an individual, organization, or group of people — must show that he or she has in some way been excluded from housing. The respondent, on the other hand (who is by no means the accused, emphasized Porter), must formulate a response to the complaint.

According to Porter, housing providers tend to look at human rights complaints in the wrong context of using the law. "We think immediately of how the law is to be used by people whose rights have been violated," he said, "but there are a lot of people here, at this conference, who would represent the respondents' side. We must remember that we are all, in some sense, part of a whole system of housing provision."

In his own experience, Porter has found that one of the greatest barriers to effective human rights advocacy is the typical response to a human rights complaint, which is based on a very traditional notion of the law. "To view the law as a bunch of rules that cannot be broken," said Porter, "and then to suggest that someone's right has been infringed upon will automatically lead a respondent to believe that he or she has been accused of breaking the law." With such a regulatory interpretation of the law, said Porter, an adversarial situation is bound to arise.

Discrimination in housing is a reality. But it is the most difficult to solve: Facts are often hard to obtain; victims are reluctant to lodge complaints; and it is widespread. For the majority of the speakers, in housing, discrimination based on social condition "is one of the most common of complaints." But, as one speaker suggests, the solution to the overriding "discrimination" issue lies in using the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as a legal tool to improve the housing situation for people who do not have the economic means to find adequate housing.

La discrimination dans le logement est une réalité. Mais elle est la plus difficile à éliminer: les preuves sont souvent difficiles à obtenir, les victimes hésitent à porter plainte et il s'agit d'une forme de discrimination qui est très répandue. Pour la majorité des conférenciers, la discrimination dans le logement basée sur la condition sociale «est l'une des causes de plaintes les plus fréquentes». Mais, ainsi que le suggère l'un des conférenciers, la solution à ce problème envahissant de «discrimination» consiste à se servir de la Charte des droits et libertés comme d'un outil juridique pour améliorer la situation de personnes qui n'ont pas les moyens économiques de se procurer un logement adéquat.

"We have all kinds of systems of regulation," said Porter. "If you drive through a red light, despite the fact that the law says you mustn't do it, then you are guilty of breaking the law, and society relies on a higher authority to step in and enforce traffic law regulation." Although that regulatory aspect of human rights law does exist in some very clear-cut cases, such as the practice of racial discrimination in a blatant form, Porter believes that the whole issue of human rights in housing falls with increasing frequency under a reflective or critical element of the law. "This element allows us to get outside of the system; take a look at all the rules and regulations," he said, "and then question whether or not they are as they should be and whether or not they can and should be transformed in some sense."

According to Porter, the effective use of the reflective or critical element of the law requires a constituency. In the housing field, the constituency is that group of people for whom the system is not working, as well as the relatively small group who are in a position to point out that the system is not working. Porter sees human rights advocacy and work as a way for the people for whom the system isn't working to have a voice, as well as representing a means of resolving their problems.

"That is the real role of the respondent," said Porter. "Collectively, we are all the respondents to a whole variety of human rights complaints. It is our job to respond in a constructive way to solving the problems of the people for whom the system is not working."

Porter stressed the importance of getting outside the system in an international, as well as domestic, legal context. "By getting outside the Canadian system and working with groups internationally," said Porter, "it becomes easier to identify some of the things that are not working in our own country."

Porter found that all around the world, people who are marginalized and for whom the system is not working suffer at least one common housing anathema — exclusion based on economic status. In many countries, economic exclusion takes the form of denial of credit to women or the denial of access to land and fundamental resources to people of certain classes. "In Canada," said Porter, "it is clearly becoming a situation where people of low income are denied access to adequate housing through screening processes based on credit rating, past rental history, income, or employment."

"In Canada, low-income people are being denied access to adequate housing through screening processes based on credit rating, past rental history, income, or employment."

Within the context of Porter's complaints framework, Muriel Garon, Commission des droits de la personne du Québec, in her address took on the role of the human rights commission itself.

Garon, who is co-ordinating research for the commission and is in the midst of initiating a project that will deal specifically with the issue of discrimination in housing, told the audience that the mandate of the Quebec Human Rights Commission includes not only the conduct of enquiries but also the establishment of information and education programs. It requires the co-operation with organizations involved in promoting human rights.

According to Garon, the commission's struggle against discrimination is outlined and defined in Section 10 of the human rights act. In this section, all the traditional grounds for discrimination are described, including social condition. Social condition is a broad term incorporating poverty, she said, and in housing, discrimination based on social condition is one of the most common complaints brought before the human rights commission.

"Among the many problems submitted to the human rights commission," said Garon, "discrimination in housing is by far the most difficult to solve through enquiries or before the courts, for reasons that are inherent to the problem." The first problem lies in obtaining the facts. Discrimination in housing occurs most often without witnesses, during extremely brief periods, and often by telephone. When it does occur face to face, it is generally very subtle in nature. For this reason it is extremely difficult to prove.

In addition, people who are victims of discrimination in housing do not generally want to enter into a long process of accusations and complaint-lodging. "These people come to the human rights commission because they want to find out what their rights are," said Garon, "how these rights can be respected, and what means can be used. But what these people want most of all is housing. They also want support, advice, and help in the form of mediation to obtain housing, but they are not interested in using the law and going to court, which is a very lengthy process that will not necessarily guarantee them access to housing."

Another problem that makes the struggle against discrimination in housing extremely difficult to deal with is that it is widespread. "The commission believes that each year in the City of Montreal," said Garon, "there are thousands of cases of discrimination in housing."

In response to this mounting problem, the commission has developed a more effective approach that uses all available means. But it will take time, said Garon, for this program, in its entirety, to be successfully implemented. "We have been working at it now for almost two years, and we know that discrimination in housing must remain one of our priorities for at least two more years before we can expect to see any results."

The commission's approach is an integrated and strategic one, said Garon, but will only be effective if the separate links in the chain work with and in support of one another. Its effectiveness will require a concerted effort on the part of all partners in housing. "There are no ready-made solutions. We can only solve the problems facing us by trying out different approaches and evaluating their successes or failures at each step."

The commission's initiative includes three major phases: the recognition phase, the operational phase, and the political phase.

Crucial to the success of the first phase — recognition — is being able to demonstrate that there is a discrimination problem in housing. To say there is a problem is just not good enough, said Garon, because many people simply shut their eyes and refuse to recognize what is happening around them. To show that there is a discrimination problem out there, the commission has to provide absolute proof it exists.

Accordingly, the first year-and-a-half of the project was dedicated to conducting studies to provide a basis on which the commission could identify partners in the housing discrimination issue. (Data were collected from all possible sources, including censuses. During the first year, the commission primarily worked with visible minorities on the assumption that once the problems experienced by visible minorities were identified, the information could easily be extrapolated for other groups.) Census data were used to locate the different minorities in Montreal and to determine their areas of greatest concentration. Not surprisingly, in comparing neighbourhoods, the commission found that, for similar socio-economic conditions, housing was more expensive where minorities were most concentrated.

"Discrimination is so widespread. Yet, it is by far the most difficult to solve for reasons that are inherent to the problem."

"In our society, housing is a mere consumer good that is becoming less and less accessible to many people. Given the significance of housing in our lives, one wonders why there are no laws to protect the right to housing for everyone."

The commission also conducted a test study. Using 200 Montreal newspaper accommodation ads as its sample base, teams of two people — one white, the other black — inquired individually about rental accommodation. Each team member phoned and then visited the apartment in question. "The results of that study on discrimination were shocking," said Garon. "Twenty-five per cent of francophone blacks were not even allowed to visit the accommodation. Half of those were refused on the phone simply because of their accent; the other half were rejected at the door. When this group showed up to see an apartment, they were told it had already been rented, or were given various other reasons for entry denial. The white person who arrived five minutes later, however, was ushered into the apartment." After collecting and analyzing data, the commission then reviewed the policies and programs of the Government of Quebec and examined programs in other countries.

Once all of these studies were completed, the commission approached tenants' associations and advocacy groups to advise them that this problem was to be a top priority on the agenda of the human rights commission. Landlord associations and government agencies were then contacted; the media were summoned to announce that the commission was undertaking a major campaign on the issue of discrimination in housing. Thus, the first phase was completed.

During the second, or operational phase, the commission worked mainly with community organizations to determine the type of effort and support they were willing to provide. In its original diagnostic, the commission realized that one of the major problems in fighting discrimination in housing was the lack of information. "This was a problem both with actual or potential victims of discrimination," said Garon, "and with actual or potential discriminators. Thus, our first action was to launch a press campaign. The messages we wanted to get across were that discrimination exists; that it is a common occurrence; that it has serious consequences for large segments of the population; that it is against the law; and that there are ways to fight it."

Understanding that the mere disclosure of the problem in the press and the media would not provide immediate results, the intention of the commission was rather to create a climate in which individual discriminatory actions committed in privacy could be made public. "We wanted people to know that landlords cannot do everything they want with impunity; their actions have serious social consequences."

During this phase, the commission also worked closely with potential victims of discrimination. "Our meetings with community organizations made us realize that these people needed tools to help them secure accommodation." Based on that knowledge and that discrimination occurs at every step of the process, the commission prepared, published, and distributed through community and public organizations 35,000 copies of a checklist that identified simple procedures for each step involved in the search for accommodation: what to do before starting; how to prepare the material, what to ask on the phone, what should and should not be done, and what to look for during the visit; and what should be written down to lodge a complaint if a person believes that he or she has been discriminated against. Because discrimination can occur in a brief moment, this last procedure is crucial, said Garon. "If the facts are not written down accurately, the case has no grounds, and we cannot act on it."

The checklist was one method of fighting discrimination in a general way, Garon told the audience, but more specific means

are needed to solve specific problems. "One of the major problems in discrimination cases is the obligation for the potential tenant to prove that he or she is solvent. This obligation allows landlords to eliminate a large segment of the population." Currently, landlord associations are using credit rating enquiries to determine the credit standing of potential tenants. According to Garon, members of landlord associations in Quebec can contact credit agencies and, for a fee, a landlord can have an enquiry conducted on a potential tenant. However, inherent in credit rating enquiries are a number of problems: the information is generally irrelevant to housing; the question of the right to privacy; people on welfare are automatically eliminated; and landlords are increasingly using this method against groups they wish to exclude — visible minorities, single women with children, and welfare beneficiaries. "In short," said Garon, "the credit rating check is an instrument directed against population groups who are already vulnerable to discrimination."

The commission will be contacting public organizations to enlist their help in developing an official voucher that could be attached to the lease and would have to be filled out by the landlord. This voucher would indicate if the tenant has paid his or her rent regularly and the amount of rent paid. Although this system is complex because it will have to be introduced in the regulations of the Régie du logement du Québec, Garon calls it "a simple instrument." It will, however, require that the people who will more likely become victims of discrimination develop new habits. "But," Garon said, "I think that we cannot solve the problem without proposing solutions. For the moment, this one appears to be the most effective."

In the past, it has been considered that a tenant can allot as much as 35 per cent of his or her income for rent and still manage. It is believed, therefore, that anyone paying more than this percentage will have problems making ends meet. Today, however, an increasing number of people pay more than 50 per cent of their income on housing, which throws into question the validity of the 35 per cent income theshold. "It is not for us to decide that a person can only have access to housing if the cost does not exceed 35 per cent of his or her income. The establishment of such a threshold would make it necessary for landlords to conduct enquiries into people's incomes. A rent receipt, on the other hand, would show that a person paid a certain level of rent during the preceding year and also, because the receipts would indicate the date of payment, that the rent was paid promptly each month.

Another specific area the commission feels needs to be addressed is the use of housing application forms. Many owners ask potential tenants to fill out such a form. Yet, said Garon, this form creates a distance between the landlord and the potential tenant and allows the landlord to eliminate undesired tenants without having to justify the decision. The commission sees this as another discriminatory practice and is currently working to eliminate the use of this instrument. "In many cases, these application forms represent intrusions into people's privacy as questions asked can include: the tenant's age; salary; the make and year of the tenant's car; his or her driver's licence number; the name of the tenant's current employer; and how long he or she has been working for the current employer. And these questions must be answered by the tenant, the spouse, and any other tenants. It, therefore, becomes a thorough enquiry into people's lives."

The commission is currently holding discussions with landlord groups about using a standard form that would not constitute

"Landlords know that any time they choose one prospective renter over another, they are engaging in a form of discrimination."

"The most radical solution to eliminating discrimination in access to housing lies in a constitutional right to housing – using the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as a legal tool."

invasion of privacy but would be based on the demonstration of solvency through rent receipts.

The commission has also had to develop a method of providing support to those who feel they have been discriminated against. "Given the nature of discrimination in the area of housing," said Garon, "it is absolutely essential that response be provided quickly. We must get the facts immediately; otherwise, they get blurred, making it impossible to build a case." In response to this need, the commission hired three additional staff members to deal specifically with this issue and to develop tools to build cases against acts of discrimination. These tools include a questionnaire and procedures to corroborate facts with witnesses, who could be friends or parents, potential tenants, or representatives from the human rights commission who could conduct tests on specific cases.

Garon emphasized the importance of case-building. "With a good case, the tenant could negotiate alone by showing the landlord that he or she is clearly committing an act of discrimination." If this tactic does not work, however, the commission can try to mediate a solution. As a last resort, a formal complaint can be brought before the court. Although most victims of discrimination who contact the commission prefer not to use the court, said Garon, it can serve as an ultimate threat. "The idea of having to go before the courts has a general effect of dissuasion."

Another possible approach, said Garon, would be to conduct random, systematic testing. With this method, investigators from the human rights commission would pose as tenants and select available accommodation at random. If discriminatory situations occur, these cases would be brought before the commission. "Although, according to its charter, the commission has the authority to conduct enquiries," said Garon, "it has not used this approach much in the past, preferring to maintain its image as an organization promoting human rights than to create one of an organization that hunts offenders." If all other means proved ineffective, conceded Garon, the commission would have to consider this option.

The last phase, which the commission has not yet undertaken but which is nevertheless extremely important, is the political phase. The objective of this phase is to involve the other institutional players. "This is crucial, as our own resources are limited."

With a view to requesting that a statement concerning discrimination be included in their policies, the commission has identified a number of organizations it intends to contact. This was the main recommendation made by the human rights commission in a brief submitted to the City of Montreal as part of a recent consultation on housing policies.

The commission plans to meet with municipal housing commissions to discuss the possibility of developing equal access programs aimed at specific groups, such as visible minorities, and support measures to facilitate their integration. It would also like to meet with representatives of the Regie du logement du Quebec to discuss the possibility of having an anti-discriminatory clause included in lease forms and having a policy statement against discrimination posted in rental buildings.

Finally, since the groups who suffer most from economic hardship are those most vulnerable to discrimination, the commission will urge for an increase in funding for rental units.

Offering a Quebec and predominantly female perspective of the human rights complainant, Ruth Pilote, with Femmes et

Logements in Montreal, questioned the ability of Canadians to talk about a legal right to housing when housing as a universal right is not recognized anywhere in the country. Femmes et Logements is a unique organization in Canada that addresses the issues of women in housing, providing public education and extensive advocacy work in the province of Quebec.

Although some sections of our laws recognize certain aspects of the right to housing, acknowledged Pilote, Section 12 of the Quebec Human Rights Charter, for example, reads: "No one may, through discrimination, refuse to make a juridicial act concerning goods or services ordinarily offered to the public," and this includes housing. No direct reference to universal accessibility to housing appears either in the Quebec Charter of Human Rights or Quebec's Housing Act.

"In our society, housing remains a mere consumer good: a consumer good that is becoming less and less accessible to many people; a consumer good linked to fluctuations in the rental market, to the risks of speculation, and to the influences of the search for profit. Given the paramount significance of housing in our lives," said Pilote, "one must wonder why there are no laws to explicitly protect the right to housing for everyone."

In her presentation, Pilote outlined the many obstacles encountered by a vast and growing number of people in their efforts to secure adequate and affordable housing and examined the impact of these obstacles on the lives of Quebec households.

In attempting to define those households suffering from repeated rejection in their search for housing and to list the barriers limiting their access to housing, Pilote told the audience that "the financial condition of potential tenants is the major factor contributing to the difficulty of finding adequate housing." In this respect, she said, households headed by women represent the majority of people affected by this handicap.

"Women are [on the whole] less secure financially than other categories of households. They earn barely 59 per cent of a man's income. In fact, 57 per cent of households headed by women have an annual income of less than $15,000, which is slightly less than half the households headed by men."

According to Pilote, half of the households headed by women pay between 43 and 46 per cent of their income for housing, compared with only 5.5 per cent of men, who pay 41 per cent. As well, because their income increments at a slower rate than the cost of living and rent increases, the percentage of income that women pay for housing rises each year.

Another important consideration, said Pilote, is that because of their socio-economic position, the majority of women are tenants, which makes them particularly vulnerable as a group to the upheavals of the rental housing market. "Their tenant status, combined with the precariousness of their financial and material situation, makes them easy prey for landlords."

"Women are the most common targets of harassment from landlords," Pilote told the audience. "Whether to force illegal eviction, to impose abusive rent increases, to avoid assuming maintenance responsibilities, or to solicit sexual favours, some landlords will not hesitate to use harassment to reach their ends." According to Pilote, the use of intimidation, threats, verbal abuse, and repeated interference is common among landlords.

A 1986 survey on the situation of women tenants in Montreal showed that 48 per cent of women tenants in that city are victims of abusive landlords. "Women who are confronted with this kind of situation have no alternative but to move, with all the inconvenience and cost that this involves."

"Landlords cannot do everything they want with impunity; their actions have serious social consequences."

"Women are the most common targets of harassment from landlords."

Other socio-cultural factors, which are difficult to quantify, add to women's housing problems and limit their access to housing. Again, according to the same 1986 survey, the main grounds for discrimination in housing is the presence of children, and this is worse in the case of single-parent households. "Because we know that 86 per cent of single-parent families are headed by women, we can say that the difficulties associated with the presence of children primarily affect women."

Also, the balance of power between men and women, combined with the balance of power between landlords and tenants, works against women. "This double balance of power, in addition to maintaining women in a position of inferiority," said Pilote, "forces women to tolerate housing conditions that are often unacceptable [to men]."

Added to this are societal stereotypes of and prejudices toward women. "Attitudes, opinions, and judgements made against women are numerous," said Pilote, "and contribute to keeping them at the level of second-class citizens and thus as undesirable tenants in the minds of many landlords."

Although this list by no means covers all the aspects of the situation, said Pilote, a quick look at the chronic poverty of women, their situation as single parents, their precarious position in terms of housing, the deep prejudice toward them, and the persistent and unequal balance of power between men and women is indicative of the major obstacles confronting women in their efforts to secure access to adequate and affordable housing.

"We could add other elements to these factors," said Pilote, "such as the colour of the skin, the fact that one is a welfare recipient, disability, old age, etc., and the picture gets even darker."

The price that victims of discrimination in housing pay for their so-called differences is high, said Pilote. The 1986 survey showed that, in the end, half the victims of discrimination found housing too expensive for their means; housing that was inadequate and located in undesirable neighbourhoods that lacked essential services. "Obviously, this has both long- and short-term effects on the lives of these households. Having to move so often and the related costs of moving leave major gaps in the family budget. Removal from natural networks and basic services results in gradual impoverishment and an erosion of quality of life. After repeated uprooting, these people end up losing control over their immediate environment."

While they are the ones most directly affected, it is not only the households that feel the impact of this situation. Housing problems also generate high costs for society in terms of health services, juvenile delinquency, loss of performance, and so on.

With the present economic situation, competition in both the public and private rental markets is becoming increasingly stiff. "On one side," said Pilote, "governments are gradually eliminating housing programs that gave low-income households access to subsidized housing. In Quebec, this resource is becoming even less accessible to the poorer households since there is an attempt, through selective criteria, to adjust demand to supply and not supply to demand, as it should be."

"On the other side, private-market landlords have developed sophisticated techniques to select tenants, such as black lists, computer-assisted credit rating checks, and information forms that must be filled out by potential tenants."

Although landlord groups claim they are discriminating against tenants and that selection is based only on tenant solvency, said Pilote, in many cases, tenants do not even have the opportunity to prove their solvency. "Prospective tenants are refused a visit

of the accommodation, often on the phone, as soon as the landlord hears their accent, or that they have children, or that they are welfare beneficiaries, or that they are single mothers. Clearly, these attitudes are based more on prejudice toward certain categories of households than on the tenant's credit rating."

"Where will this witch-hunting lead us? Will we soon find ourselves with sub-classes of tenants whose right to housing is neither recognized nor protected? How can we change the selection rules and criteria set by landlords? Landlords believe they are better protected against high-risk tenants by acting as they do. However, education and information would help them understand that discrimination will not provide protection and that tenants eliminated through their arbitrary and discriminatory criteria are, more often than not, responsible and conscientious people."

According to Pilote, the solutions needed to fight discrimination in housing are complex. "In addition to human rights charters and laws, it is urgent to develop a housing policy that will include the concept of universal access to housing."

Pilote expressed the fear that, without concerted action from all levels of government, the housing situation in Quebec will continue to deteriorate. "The gap is becoming wider. Eighty-four per cent of the housing subsidies granted by government go to landlords in the form of tax shelters and assistance to homeownership or renovation programs." Housing priorities must be redefined to meet the needs of those who lack adequate housing; our political and collective decisions must reflect this orientation."

As an indication of the importance of housing to family life, Pilote referred to a recent survey of the residential mobility of single-parent families in a central Montreal neighbourhood. "All single-parent families questioned in the survey experienced serious housing problems after the break-up of their relationship. Only when these families were settled in adequate, stable, and affordable housing were women able to regain control of their lives by returning to school or the workforce or by becoming actively involved in the social network."

In conclusion, Pilote said, "It is clear that by taking action on housing issues we can play a direct role in the development of individuals and the prevention of social problems. What are we waiting for?"

"We must develop a housing policy that includes the concept of universal access to housing."

Representing the role of the respondent and focusing on the rental practices of the private sector, Rob Herman, chair of the Small Property Owners Committee and director of the Fair Rental Policy Organization of Ontario, told the audience that discrimination does not play a part in the rental process and that prejudice toward landlords in this regard is based not on truth but on ignorance of the whole story.

According to Herman, who is also president of a firm that owns and manages several rental properties in the Toronto area, when an apartment becomes vacant, the successful property manager must apply good business sense. Although "it is of no concern to a landlord what a person's income is," said Herman, "one of the criteria is to establish that a prospective tenant has the ability to pay the rent."

He told the audience that, as a landlord, he would much rather have a tenant who has learned to budget a small but dependable income of any source, than a high-income tenant who has elevated spending habits and is careless about paying debts, "as

it has been my experience that some high-income earners are the most difficult people from whom to collect rent."

Herman also emphasized that credit worthiness is only one of many factors in selecting a tenant who will be quiet, conscientious, clean, and respect the neighbours' rights. As it is important for a landlord to judge each tenant on individual merits, credit, business, and personal references are often investigated.

"After all," said Herman, "it is community living that we are talking about. There are no provisions in the landlord and tenant laws for tenants to seek eviction of a bad neighbour. Too often, good neighbours move rather than complain about unruly neighbours."

"Landlords know that any time they choose one prospective renter over another, they are engaging in a form of discrimination," said Herman. "They may, for example, choose a good housekeeper over a messy one or a non-smoker over a smoker. Both types are discriminatory, but neither type is necessarily illegal or undesirable."

In cases of non-payment of rent, lengthy delays in obtaining evictions can cause undue hardship on landlords, particularly for those who own smaller properties, said Herman. "There is no reason why, when there is only one month's rent deposit as a backup, that it should take six to eight weeks for a 'fast' eviction and three to six months to get rid of a 'professional' bad tenant." A provision for quick remedy in the case of non-paying tenants, he said, would have an immediate impact on the number of rental housing units available by bringing back into the market those units that have been removed as a result of regulation difficulties.

"One criteria of a landlord's is to establish that a prospective tenant can pay the rent."

Herman cited a recent City of Toronto survey that found nearly 1,000 rental units vacant in that city alone. While 25 per cent of the units had been shut down after experiencing problems with late rental payments and 30 per cent had stopped renting as a result of rent controls and other government regulations, two-thirds of the unit owners said they might be persuaded to make their apartments available for rent again if evictions were made easier. "In a world with a zero per cent vacancy rate," said Herman, "it is easy to feel that some people are not finding accommodation as a result of discrimination. But high-income tenants in Toronto are faced with this so-called discrimination, too. There simply aren't enough apartments to go around."

According to Herman, the goal of the rental housing industry is to work toward an ample supply of housing and adequate income support for all Ontarians. However, he said, the Ontario Treasurer's recent budget decision to push up the price of housing by increasing lot levies and land transfer taxes is yet another stumbling block against the achievement of this goal. "But that is what housing policy in Ontario has traditionally been: interventionist attitudes without any holistic vision."

Herman cited rent controls as the province's greatest impediment to the accessibility of housing. Although rent controls are an essential element of tenant protection, an issue that, according to Herman, is of paramount importance, the problem in Ontario is the type of intervention and the severity of the controls. "Fourteen years after rent controls were introduced as a 'temporary' measure," said Herman, "Ontario is faced with low vacancy rates, a chronic housing shortage, a reduction in real rents, and a gradual loss of rental stock through reduced new construction, reduced maintenance expenditures, and attempts to convert the rental stock to condominiums and non-residential use."

Ontario is not the only place where rent controls have failed in their objectives, however. Herman cited an American study by Anthony Downs that evaluated rent controls from the perspective of the overall public interest rather than from the viewpoint of either tenants or landlords. He concluded that rent regulation is only feasible under wartime conditions, when the demand for rental housing is rising sharply but new construction is legally restricted to conserve resources. In the absence of these conditions, Downs found that rent controls are neither an effective nor an appropriate response to perceived housing shortages. On the contrary, he found that they generally exacerbate such shortages. Downs also found that the more stringent the controls, the more adverse the effects.

Herman criticized the Ontario government's 1986 decision to extend, revise, and tighten rent controls, telling the audience that "Ontario now has the dubious honour of being possibly the only place in the world that controls new construction." The price Ontarians pay for these controls is high, said Herman. In 1988, Ontario had the top 15 out of the top 20 lowest vacancy rates in Canada.

Under the Rental Housing Protection Act of 1986, condominium conversions, major renovations, and demolitions were banned in Ontario in an effort to address the province's tight rental housing market and prevent further reductions in the existing supply of rental housing. But by preventing major renovations now, Herman told the audience, the aging stock will deteriorate that much quicker and cost that much more to eventually replace. "The Ontario government currently estimates the cost of preserving the province's existing housing stock at $10 billion."

"Worse still," said Herman, "by preventing conversions to condominiums, first-time homebuyers have lost what would likely have been their only chance at affordable homeownership."

These detrimental changes in housing legislation led to the creation of the Fair Rental Policy Organization of Ontario, which represents people who own, build, manage, and finance more than 200,000 rental property units across the province. The group works to educate tenants, the public, the media, and politicians about the complexities of the housing market and the need for a fair housing policy that would ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing for all Ontarians.

"It is impossible for the members of Fair Rental to ignore the pressing housing needs confronting so many members of our society," said Herman. "More than 42,000 eligible households are lined up on public housing authority waiting lists across Ontario, an increase of more than 21 per cent from the previous year."

Herman called for a commitment by all levels of government to seek greater efficiency in their response to the housing shortage problem in Ontario. "We believe that rent controls, because they are not targeted, ultimately hurt those whom they are designed to help — the low-income and the disadvantaged."

Herman told the audience that many people cannot afford rents at any reasonable level and indicated their problem is one of inadequate income, not unreasonable rent levels. "The solution is to direct the financial assistance to those who really need it," he said.

Direct assistance would promote rental equity since assistance would be available to all those who qualify, "not just the lucky few who are in the right place at the right time, as in the case of rent-controlled and social housing." In addition, said Herman,

"To say that landlords discriminate against poor people is to show ignorance of what really goes on."

assistance would be available immediately, in contrast to the two- or three-year wait now common on social housing lists. As well, shelter allowances would give the needy more flexibility in choosing where they want to live because they would no longer be restricted to public housing units.

Herman added, however, that Fair Rental advocates shelter allowances only in partnership with laws that protect tenants from unconscionable rent increases.

Concerning the costs involved, Herman cited two studies: the one by John Chant in 1985 estimated the total cost of a comprehensive shelter allowance program for Ontario at approximately $200 million; this is 20 per cent less than the $240 million estimate representing the total cost of rent controls in the province, given by Enid Slack.

Although Herman said that Fair Rental applauds a recent government announcement of improvements to shelter supplements for people on welfare as a good first step, it does not feel that the government has gone far enough, pointing out that Ontario lags behind other provinces in social assistance support. The group recommends social assistance payments provide shelter supplements that recognize reasonable and realistic costs.

"Canada has made a formal, international commitment to providing adequate housing for its people."

Herman waved away any surprise that might be shown to the fact that landlords advocate increased social assistance in the form of shelter allowances. "The notion that landlords discriminate against poor people, especially those receiving social assistance," said Herman, "is a display of ignorance of what really goes on." While many high-income tenants do occupy low-rental apartments, he said, this is the case wherever rent controls are in place.

"The need to create a new, innovative housing policy is an issue close to my heart," said Herman. "I deal with the problems arising from backward policies every day in my work, and I fear for our future communities if we don't come to grips with the issues now." Herman told the audience that he believes both the private and non-profit sectors have a role to play in creating solutions to housing problems and opposing the wrong kind of government intervention.

In conclusion, Herman urged government to shift its focus from a program that has, for 14 years, contributed to rather than solved the housing problem and the audience to focus its debate on the means by which a new housing policy can be implemented to improve access to housing in Ontario.

In her address, Susannah Worth Rowley, a Charter lawyer practising in Halifax, Nova Scotia, sketched out a possible legal argument in favour of a constitutional right to housing. "In response to the criticism that my argument is merely utopian theorizing and not likely to be accepted by the courts at this time," Rowley told the audience, "I would have to say, if you don't know what your final destination is, you are probably not going to get there."

Rowley, who has done extensive research on Charter issues in general and in particular those affecting women, indicated that Section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is the critical provision in terms of finding a constitutional right to housing. This section states that "everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice."

It is important to note, said Rowley, that Section 7 guarantees neither the right to nor the enjoyment of property, while both the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments of the American Bill of Rights refer to the right "not to be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of the law."

"The omission of the right to property in the Charter is highly significant," said Rowley, "and differentiates Canada from the U.S. in an important way. In contrast to the U.S. Constitution, the Canadian Charter reflects social mores that place a higher value on security of the person than on the right to do what one wants with one's property without government interference and represents the values of today's society, as opposed to those of a society that existed 200 years ago."

Pointing out that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the U.S. Bill of Rights are two very different documents and that the values of Canadian society differ significantly from the more liberal values of American society, Rowley told the audience that Canadian courts should be reluctant to rely on constitutional precedent from the U.S. in interpreting the Canadian Charter.

"It is important to make this argument firstly," said Rowley, "because Canadian courts do rely on U.S. precedent and, secondly, because in 1971 the U.S. Supreme Court found that the need for decent shelter was not a fundamental right under the U.S. constitution." While the U.S. Supreme Court did note that, in some cases, the constitution prohibited the confiscation of private property, Rowley emphasized that there is no such prohibition and no protection per se for property rights in the Canadian Charter.

In examining the meaning of a constitutional "right," such as the right to "life, liberty, and security of person," Rowley posed several rhetorical questions.

"Does this mean that we are entitled, without government interference, to precisely such "life, liberty, and security of person" as we by our own efforts may manage to acquire? Or does it mean that if, for whatever reason, our "life, liberty, and security of person" are at risk or jeopardized, the government is constitutionally bound to eliminate these risks and to create such conditions in society so that all enjoy this Section 7 right, in fact, and to equal degrees, as guaranteed by the equality provision of Section 15?"

In the U.S., said Rowley, consistent with the language of the U.S. Bill of Rights, which is framed in negative terms of non-interference by the government, a right has generally come to mean a zone of non-interference by the state. For example, no one shall be deprived of "life, liberty, or property" without "due process of the law." But there is no affirmative statement in the text of that document that assures everyone the right to life, liberty, or property.

Rowley contrasted this to the use of language in the Canadian Charter, where rights and freedoms are affirmatively described: "Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms;" "everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of the person;" and "everyone is equal before and under the law." She also characterized Section 7's right to security of the person as a positive entitlement rather than as a zone of non-interference by government.

Based solely on the language of the Charter, said Rowley, one might make a legal argument that the Canadian government is obliged to pass laws and to create social conditions that will, in fact, allow individuals to exercise those rights and freedoms the

"For Canada to allow anyone to be without decent and affordable shelter is to be in breach of its international commitments."

Charter guarantees them. "This affirmative or positive right," said Rowley, "is the starting point for a consitutional right to housing."

To argue successfully for a constitutional right to housing, said Rowley, it is important to reconceptualize our liberal notions of rights in terms of positive entitlements, claims an individual may make on the state, as well as zones of non-interference by the government.

Because they tend to be less costly to the government than positive rights, said Rowley, it may be easier politically for courts to accept the notion of negative rights. "While a government simply has to sit back and do nothing in most cases to ensure a negative right, to guarantee a positive right requires action. This costs money," which Rowley cites as one of the major stumbling blocks in getting affirmative rights interpreted in the courts.

Rowley then turned to Section 36 of the Constitution Act of 1982 — Equalization and Regional Disparities — which enunciates a very broad collective or group principle of equality. It goes beyond this, however, and states that "Parliament and the legislatures, together with the Government of Canada and the provincial governments, are committed to ... providing essential public services of reasonable quality to all Canadians." This section may be useful as an interpretive guide to Section 7, Rowley explained, as, in keeping with the concept of a positive right, it envisions the role of government as a provider of public services, for example, in the right to access to decent and affordable housing, whether in the public or private sectors.

If the courts can be persuaded to characterize "security of the person" as an affirmative right, said Rowley, references to Canada's international obligations can then be used to argue that included in this general right is the specific right to decent and affordabe housing.

In 1948, when the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, both Canada and the U.S. voted in favour of the Resolution. According to Rowley, the critical section of the Declaration, for the purposes of a right to housing, is Article 25, which reads:

> Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care, and necessary social services ... .

Madame Justice Wilson considered this very provision in Singh vs. Minister of Employment and Immigration, said Rowley. In making her decision, she quoted the Law Reform Commission, which had suggested:

> The right to security of the person means not only protection of one's physical integrity but the provision of necessaries for its support.

According to Rowley, in 1976, Canada became a party to two International Covenants, one on civil and political rights, the other on economic, social, and cultural rights, which are pieces of international "legislation" intended to elaborate and implement the general principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. According to Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights:

> The States party to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for

himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing, and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right ... .

"This country has promised internationally that everyone has a right to housing and that it will take steps to see that housing is provided," said Rowley. "So, there is a presumption that Canada does not intend to violate its international obligations."

There is now a considerable body of case law from the Supreme Court of Canada to the effect that it is appropriate to consider Canada's international obligations in interpreting domestic law. "The approach taken," said Rowley, "is generally this: Where there is an ambiguous provision, an international covenant is appropriately used in interpreting that provision, provided nothing expressly goes against what is in the covenant."

Rowley quoted Chief Justice Dickson, in his 1987 reference to the use of international covenants, in the interpretation of Charter provisions:

> The various sources of international human rights law ... must, in my opinion, be relevant and persuasive sources for interpretation of the Charter's provisions ... . I believe that the charter should generally be presumed to provide protection at least as great as that afforded by similar provisions in international human rights documents, which Canada has ratified.
>
> In short, these provide a relevant and persuasive source for O Tinterpretation of the provisions of the Charter, especially when they arise out of Canada's international obligations under human rights conventions.

Rowley also noted a recent case, A. G. of Quebec vs. Irwin Toy, which allows for the possibility of a right to housing, although it is not expressly mentioned in Section 7.

"Canada is a wealthy country," said Rowley. "It has adequate housing stock so that no one need be homeless or live in inadequate shelter. It has no excuse for failing to house its poor adequately, unlike certain Third World countries, which simply do not have adequate resources."

In conclusion, said Rowley, "The bottom line is that this country has made a formal, international commitment to providing adequate housing for its people. For Canada to allow anyone to be without decent and affordable shelter is to be in breach of its international commitments."

ACCESS OF NEIGHBOURHOODS

ACCÈS AUX QUARTIERS

Serge Filion (Chair)
Head, Urban Development Division
City of Québec

François Marchand
Lawyer, Jobin, Fournier et Associés, and
Municipal Councillor, City of Québec

Leslie Conley
Development Co-ordinator, Communitas Inc.
Edmonton, Alberta

James McGregor
Political Attaché, Executive Committee
City of Montréal

The municipal political process can be a positive or negative experience for housing groups, depending on the amount of spade work and the degree of persistence committed by these groups, as well as their level of sophistication.

If one message in this session came through loud and clear by all the speakers, it is that knowing how to use the political process to one's advantage is integral to pushing through a housing project.

Le processus politique municipal peut être une expérience positive ou négative pour les groupes de logement, selon la quantité de travail de base effectué et le degré de persévérance démontré par ces groupes, ainsi que leur niveau d'avancement.

S'il y a un message que tous les conférenciers ont fait ressortir très clairement dans cette séance, c'est que savoir comment utiliser le processus politique à son avantage fait partie intégrante de la réussite d'un projet de logement.

In opening the discussion following the mock municipal council debate, the chair, Serge Filion, informed the audience that, although many of the lines used in the course of the debate might have seemed overly dramatic, they were, in effect, actual statements made by various Ontario municipal councillors. Written by Marcus Wiseman, an employee of the Ontario Ministry of Housing, the original script was compiled by a University of Waterloo student who studied the minutes of municipal council meetings from across the province and articles in newspapers and interviewed planners involved in different cases before council.

Filion informed the audience that a videotape of the debate, as it was performed previously by a group of professional actors, is available from the City of Kitchener Planning Department.

François Marchand, a lawyer with Jobin, Fournier and Associates and a Quebec City municipal councillor, used a specific case from his own municipality to demonstrate how **not** to go about the process of implementing a housing project.

But before elaborating on the case in question, Marchand first provided some background on Quebec City's housing strategy. In a community with many old neighbourhoods, he said, Quebec City's three major objectives are: urban renewal, reintegrating people in neighbourhoods where the population has decreased, and co-operating with groups involved in housing projects for low-income citizens.

Last year, after a long consultation process, a master plan was developed that sets objectives and directions for each of these neighbourhoods. Publications that include information on the

architecture, characteristics, and planning for each neighbourhood have been made available. Finally, there is a written policy for each neighbourhood, which anyone can consult.

Although Marchand conceded that these documents do not provide the answers to all of the city's problems, they do provide a basis for discussing the directions that should be taken in housing.

To avoid useless discussions and problems, the housing policy promotes the concept that people should remain in their neighbourhood. In other words, we try to avoid, as much as possible, displacing people by putting them in another neighbourhood or another part of the city. "And not only do we try to keep them in the same neighbourhood," said Marchand, "but we also try to keep them in the same units — with improved conditions through renovations."

In Quebec City, the municipality's efforts have focused on renovating and recycling, with the result that many old buildings, monasteries, and industrial buildings have been renovated and converted into co-operative or public housing. The renovation of these old buildings makes integration much easier, and the people favour this type of project. This approach "helps the people in terms of housing and improves the look of the city."

Another approach the city is taking, said Marchand, involves income supplements. Using this means, the city is helping people financially to find housing rather than building major housing projects. These projects are smaller and easier to integrate in the urban tissue.

Still, there are problems: Last year, a group purchased a building to house people suffering from AIDS without consulting anyone. "They just announced their project publicly and then approached council to make the necessary zoning changes," said Marchand. "In a short time, a petition with over 1,000 signatures had been circulated. The project was subsequently abandoned because the organizers felt it had got off to a poor start."

City Hall found it difficult to support such a project because of the petition and because the councillor for that neighbourhood had been one of the signatories.

However, all was not lost. Marchand said that city officials immediately contacted the organizers and, by working together, were able to find another building in another residential neighbourhood three months later. "Consultations were held, and the project was approved very easily."

"This," said Marchand, "shows the importance for any group to co-operate with City Hall from the outset, to meet people right away, and to hold consultations."

Another problem that can be encountered is the high concentration of the population. Low- and moderate-income households tend to live in the older neighbourhoods of the downtown area, but "we have to ensure that the concentration of population is not too high — which can pose a real problem."

The urban environment must also be considered, Marchand said, as the buildings must be integrated physically into the neighbourhood. "We have to think of green spaces and parks."

In summing up his remarks, Marchand said that Quebec City is also confronting new problems, such as trying to reintegrate people who suffered from psychiatric troubles. "We are already working with psychiatric hospitals to ensure that community rehabilitation projects are not undertaken without consultation or at the expense of the residents."

"If there is open consultation and if people are ready to co-operate, we will be able to avoid long and useless discussions," he said.

Dramatization of the political approval process where interests clash over the provision of affordable housing in a specific neighbourhood. Concept adapted from the successful premiere organized in Kitchener, Ontario, for the affordable housing conference "Developing the Will." Original script by Marcus Wiseman. Adaptation by Martin Herzog.

Théatralisation du processus d'approbation politique, lorsque certains intérêts s'opposent à la création de logements à prix abordable dans un quartier particulier. Concept adapté d'une première théâtrale réussie organisée à Kitchener, en Ontario, pour la conférence sur le logement à prix abordable, «Developing the Will» (Bâtir la détermination). Scénario original de Marcus Wiseman. Adaptation de Martin Herzog.

Mock Municipal Council Debate: The Script

The scene is the Council Chambers of Broma City during a meeting of the Council. Of the eight seats available to the council, only five are occupied. Present are the mayor, two councillors (Dutson and Sleymer), a planner (Steve Arstad), and a council clerk

(Michael Robert). There are two podiums. One is in the centre of the council semi-circle and is used for presentations to council from the public. The other is off to the left of the council semi-circle and is for the proponent and planner presentations. There is a sparce audience listening to the council's deliberations.

MAYOR: (bangs on a gavel for order) Next order of business on the agenda, Mr. Robert?

CLERK: Yes, Your Worship. The next item on the agenda is PD 12543/65 — Zone Change Application — 89/19/VH/R — Arbuckle Non-Profit Housing Corporation, for the property at 987 George Street at the corner of George and Victoria Streets.

MAYOR: Thank you. If Council is not familiar with the application, it is a zone change application and by-law amendment to permit construction of a non-profit housing project in the Dunlevy neighbourhood, which is Ward 7, I believe, Councillor Dutson's ward. Mr. Arstad, may we hear from the planning department vis-à-vis the application?

ARSTAD: (rises from his seat and stands at the left podium) Thank you, Your Worship; Members of Council. The application before Council is for a zoning change for the property at 987 George Street, which will permit the construction of a 43-unit complex to be operated by the Arbuckle Non-Profit Housing Corporation. The lot is currently vacant and is used unofficially as a green space. The Official Plan designation is residential, and the zoning for the area is semi-restricted R2. The construction in the area is in keeping with this plan and its corollaries, including the second revision to the Official Plan, more commonly known as the Revised Plan or the Second Revision. Currently, there is an

Lesley Conley, a development co-ordinator with Communitas Incorporated, a group that works with co-operative developments in the City of Edmonton, began her remarks by discussing the various roles of the players as they were portrayed in the mock debate.

According to Conley, the planner's position was ambiguous. Neutral in tone, she was unsure of the degree of his support for the project. "If he was for it," she said, "he should have been a little more so in terms of the language that he used and also in his enthusiasm for the project itself." In addition, she felt the planner should have been more sensitive to the position of the council and should have addressed the issues in a more positive manner.

The architect, said Conley, should have been better prepared. "If he had been working for a non-profit group, I would have expected a more professional presentation and more professional work." As well, the architect should have taken a more in-depth look at some of the key issues, such as parking and the aesthetics of the project.

Conley was surprised that the character of "Councillor Dutson" was willing to put the issue to a vote so readily. "What we usually see in this kind of situation," she said, "is the councillor backing away from the real issue and playing up the red herrings a little bit more." By beating around the bush, said Conley, Dutson could have stalled for time and avoided the real issues altogether.

Conley felt that the time Gaudet had to present his position was not sufficient for him to win over any of the councillors who were present. He would have been wise, therefore, she said, to concentrate on understanding the various positions of the members of council. After determining those for and against, he could then have played on some of the issues that would sway those in the middle.

"In our province we don't usually end up with quite such a confrontational situation," Conley told the audience, turning to an analysis of the municipal council process as it exists in Edmonton. Presentations dealing with public concerns are initially made to a public affairs committee. The issue then goes to an executive committee where those concerned are provided a further opportunity to deal with the issues. Then, depending on how comfortable the executive committee feels with the issue, said Conley, it can go to a vote or be passed on to council.

Issues such as this are generally passed on to council where, when municipal elections are imminent at least, she said, they are most often stalled or deferred. "We can go around and around if council determines that it requires more information: back to public affairs, then to the executive committee, then to council. So, really, it becomes a process of stalling in order to see how long we will hold out before eventually abandoning a project."

James McGregor, a planner by profession and political attaché for the Executive Committee for the City of Montreal, said that in his municipality the trend is favourable toward social housing and social projects. However, he added, "this has not prevented us from experiencing similar cases of NIMBY during the past year."

McGregor then switched to making reference to the mock council debate: "I would like to draw attention to the actor who mentioned the professionalism displayed by the architect and municipal staff. They &the municipal staffé are the city planners, the professionals hired by city council to provide advice. For this reason, he said, it is important that backup studies, etc., be provided so that a consensus, or "balance," can be reached by all the parties involved.

McGregor also told the audience, "As a group it is important to lobby before appearing before council as, obviously, a municipal council meeting is not the most appropriate place to hold such a debate or to sell a project. Because people are somewhat biased, the result will only be a debate, which will create dissension." Therefore, concluded McGregor, a council meeting "is not the moment to try and reach a consensus or to win opinions."

"So what can be done?" In listing several options that might be tried, including zoning changes and building code amendments, McGregor told the audience that the City of Montreal changed the zoning by-laws and regulations to include boarding houses as a form of housing. The changes involved expanding "a number of areas where boarding houses are allowed."

Other forms of support can also be provided by council, including the development of a housing policy. To illustrate his point, McGregor cited the Ontario government's recent policy that provides for a minimum percentage of affordable housing in new subdivisions. Another kind of legislative support is the Charter of Rights.

Having said this, however, McGregor does not believe that zoning or by-law changes will, in themselves, prevent NIMBY issues from coming before council. Thus, he said, the quality of a presentation becomes even more important. "In Montreal, we have started requiring that there be quality drawings and models clearly illustrating what is to be provided in any project that comes before council."

The quality of a project is particularly important in terms of housing programs, said McGregor. "We can't allow ourselves to continue building poor quality projects. It lends a bad name to social housing, and a lot of the community resistance we face has to do with the quality of the project." As a result, McGregor felt we can no longer afford to erect concrete walls in our communities, especially in existing neighbourhoods that already offer something better. In the Canadian context, with its present rules, said McGregor, this makes maximum unit prices (MUPs) extremely important.

Overdesign is another issue touched upon during the debate that concerns McGregor. Housing providers are often guilty of trying to build too many units on a particular site. "The pressure is there," said McGregor. "Land prices are incredibly high. When we do get our hands on a piece of land, it is tempting to go as far as we can and even a little bit further. MUPs don't make that any easier, but we create community problems for ourselves in many cases."

"Ultimately," said McGregor, "our most important task is to work on community attitudes." YIMBY buttons and promotional campaigns are a good first step. But to create a moral basis for the issue, it is essential that housing policy debates occur independent of specific projects. Once the general public attitude becomes one of acceptance rather than denial, housing providers should simply have to demonstrate to council that their projects adhere to all policy requirements and objectives to ensure their application before a Council sub-committee to rezone the adjacent lands on Victoria Street to Public Open Space (P) with a proviso for a zoning amendment, should one be wanted by someone at some time. And so, in accordance with my position and the positions of those who've held them before me, I request that Council now turn to Staff Report PD 12543/65 — the one that you've got before you — to review the specifics of this zone change application, that is, to permit 43 non-profit housing units to be developed on the aforesaid site.

MAYOR: (aside) Ah, Mr. Robert?

CLERK: (aside) Oh. Ahh, he says the request looks pretty good, Your Worship.

MAYOR: (aside) Now — I trust that the Members of Council have read the submitted document and are now prepared to listen to the presentation from the Arbuckle Non-Profit Housing Corporation. I would ask that their representative come forward to address Council.
(As Council briefly flicks through the pages of the report in silence, Mr. Chris Gaudet rises toward the leftmost podium)

GAUDET: Thank you, Your Worship. And thank you, Members of Council. My name is Chris Gaudet, and I'm the chair of the Arbuckle Non-Profit Housing Corporation. The plan you have before you is a proposal to construct a 43-unit non-profit housing project on the presently unused lands at the intersection of Victoria and George Streets. To permit a project of this size, we require an alteration to the zoning of the area, as the current residential zoning is insufficient for an undertaking of this worth —

DUTSON: (softly) — of this worth? Huh, that's laughable —

GAUDET: — We are hoping to begin the project

in the fall and expect completion by the summer of next year. We already have an applcants' list that would fill the building five times over, and we haven't even advertised! There are hundreds of needy in this city without adequate adequate shelter, let alone homes, and we're hoping to provide them —

DUTSON: needy! Don't you mean free-loaders?

GAUDET: No, Mr. Dutson, I don't! This city is slowly reaching a crisis in affordable housing. The number of households continues to grow, and a quarter of our residents cannot afford housing as it is. They spend more than 30 per cent of their incomes on housing. I think it is **time**, Mr. Dutson, that remarks like yours be put aside. Do you think a few smart remarks will get you a few votes next election? —

MAYOR: Mr. Gaudet and Mr. Dutson, please keep the comments down.

GAUDET: I appreciate that, Your Honour, but I would like the record to show that it was Mr. Dutson who first —

MAYOR: — I recognize the situation, Mr. Gaudet. This is not a court of law. I take personal note of your comments about Mr. Dutson.

GAUDET: Thank you. I think I understand, Your Worship.

The project, as you can see from these plans, has provision for adequate parking for all the residents and their potential guests. There is a small park with extensive landscaping behind the complex that acts as a buffer to the adjacent lots. Current residents will continue to enjoy their privacy.

If Council would now permit me, I would like to introduce Mr. Rolf Tannenbaum, architect with Simeon and Greeneddy. I feel that he is more qualified to discuss the plan specifics. (lots of laughter)

In closing, though, I'd like approval. In conclusion, McGregor recommended that, in terms of eliminating resistance, various processes be closely examined to determine if one works better than another, in general or within the framework of a certain type of community. "Are there better ways to bring this kind of project into the community so that resistance does not develop or can at least be headed off before it crystalizes and forces housing providers to either bite the bullet or give in to it?"

Question and Answer Period

Q: Why do the attitudes and atmosphere in Montreal and Quebec appear to differ?

McGregor: First, I am not sure that you are correct when you say that they are so different. Ultimately, when anyone tries to introduce a project into a neighbourhood, whatever the general attitudes, one can expect to encounter resistance. There is one difference between the two cities, and this lies in their functions as parliamentary cities. We have official parties who have programs and party lines: I think that the party line of the Montreal Citizens Movement seems, at least on the surface, more progressive.

Marchand: In Quebec City, we did not have any problems except once with the house for AIDS victims — and this was because no-one divulged anything before buying the house. Then the organizers went to the newspaper and said, "Yes, we'll open that house in a few months, and we ask now for a zoning amendment." Whhen this happened, of course, three days after the news broke a petition containing over 1,000 signatures was circulated. This is why all of us at City Hall decided to work together to locate a suitable location for the project in another part of the city. We found a beautiful house in a very rich part of the city — not in the poor part — near a park and near downtown, but with green space. Public hearings were held and, with the exception of one or two citizens who protested, everybody agreed with the house.

This is why it is important that groups work with City Hall first; otherwise, there will be confrontation.

Q: Council handles most of the problems that are faced when people try to bring forward projects. But a problem they don't address, and one that is unique to non-profit housing and co-ops as opposed to public housing, is that the wrong people are being housed. The wealthier are getting the houses as opposed to those most in need. How does one address this particular problem? How do planners or those bringing forward presentations deal with the fact that those most in need are not getting the housing?

Marchand: There are two kinds of problems: urban planning problems and income problems. As these involve two different kinds of debates, you have to separate them. Urban planners talk about urban planning: Is this the right place for this kind of house, and is there enough green space? With respect to the income problem, it is vital to establish a public policy governing who can enter a co-op and what income levels will guarantee eligibility. If the policies are clear, the answers to your problems will be clear.

Conley: In the case of housing co-ops, they are not 100 per cent targeted to begin with, and the option exists to subsidize

anywhere from 30 to 50 per cent of the residents. The remaining members pay market rents, which are set by rents in the surrounding neighbourhood. Income cut-offs are put in place to deal with the issue of who are allowed subsidies.

Q: I appreciate your policies, but the communities aren't buying that and Council members aren't buying that. I believe that there is a real problem in some communities with co-ops housing the rich; therefore, we are not getting the best bang for our buck. How do you overcome this type of problem, given community attitudes and the way co-ops and private and municipal non-profits are sometimes structured?

Conley: I appreciate what you are trying to say. What we have been attempting to do in Edmonton is to get out there and not only promote but also try to educate the general public in what housing co-ops are all about. We are attempting to rid people of some of their misconceptions concerning co-operative housing. We hold information sessions, appear on community television programs, and make ourselves available to the inter-community newspapers. It is not productive enough to just discuss the problem when the issue is on the table.

to leave you with one or two thoughts: There is no better way to assist someone than to help them help themselves. Non-profit housing and co-operative housing afford us the opportunity to lend a hand to our neighbours, in a very practical and cost-effective way, and it can start now. Thank you, and I look forward to addressing your questions later.

MAYOR: Thank you, Mr. Gaudet. I assume you are Mr. Tannenbaum?

TANNENBAUM: Yes, Your Worship?

MAYOR: Come forward please. Members of Council, I am pleased to ascede to Mr. Gaudet's request since I think that Mr. Tannenbaum might throw some illumination on the subject.

(Tannenbaum stands and approaches the podium. He seems a little uncomfortable. He sets up a slide projector, taking over Mr. Robert's desk — much to Mr. Robert's dismay)

(long pause)

MAYOR: Are you quite ready, Mr. Tannenbaum?

TANNENBAUM: Yes. Y... Y... . Yes, Your Worship. I... I... I guess I've only got a couple of things to say about the Arbuckle development. I, ahm, that is, we, Mr. Gaudet started (he clears his throat) the project with the maximum comfort of both the new residents, as well as those existing in the community, in mind. It, ahh, seemed to me that the real task at hand was to design a well-integrated building for this location. (He clears his throat again)

Ahhm... . You'll have to excuse me, Your Worship, but I'm a little nervous. Surprisingly enough, I've never done this.

MAYOR: We would never have guessed. Would you please continue?

TANNENBAUM: Ahhm, yes. Well, I figured that the building should be as unobtrusive as possible. And we selected materials that are

commonly found in the existing area. We've used various wood and brick that are found in the area rather than less expensive concrete. It would seem to sort of defeat the purpose of integration if the design of the building did affect the aesthetic effect and appearance of the existing area.
(Dutson and Sleymer both look upon the details, with quite opposite reactions)
By the, ah, same rationale, we designed the surrounding landscaping with community integration in mind. We used the park area as a buffer between the project and the existing neighbourhood, although in the zone change application you'll see a request for an alteration in the setback provisions of five metres. I don't, ah, think this is an unreasonable request as the surrounding area has been planned with a landscaping of tree shrubs, and even some trees spanning the adjacent property line. Oh, and I, ah, also became aware that the land next to the project is also under application for a zone change that would enable better integration with the landscaping there, and the landscaping that is likely to be there, should Council accept our ... ah ... modification request. Ahhh, — well, let's see, ahh, I guess that's about all. I will be available for questions, (Mayor sighs) I guess.

MAYOR: Thank you very much, Mr. Tannenbaum.

TANNENBAUM: Ah, Mr. Gaudet suggested I be available for questions.

MAYOR: (sigh) Thank you, thank you. That was ... most interesting, the plan specifically. I want to thank Mr. Gaudet for his presentation, for the completeness of the matters that have been brought before the Members of Council.
Ahhm, Mr. Arstad, would you care to ... .

TANNENBAUM: (smiling) Ahhm... Mr... Mr..., Your Worship?

MAYOR: Yes?

TANNENBAUM: Thank you. Ahhm... .

MAYOR: You're most welcome.

TANNENBAUM: It was most interesting.

MAYOR: Thank you. Thank you.

TANNENBAUM: I... I enjoyed that.

MAYOR: Ahhm, Mr. Arstad. Would you care to make some concluding comment after hearing the presentation from the Deputy?

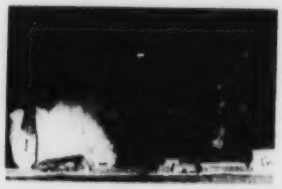
ARSTAD: Yes... Yes, Your Worship. (Arstad stands at the podium and thinks for a moment) Basically, as I see it, Mr. Tannenbaum's design has allowed for a provisional buffer zone to compensate for the negative externality created by the non-conforming use and is exacerbated by the lot limitations, as set out in the zoning by-law. It seems that, given his itaque avidiffime, he may be able to change his grade level to that of the R3 dwellings. This may not prove to be true, and I would suggest arripui venerabilem stilum spiritus three times coverage tui et prae ceteris apostolum paulum, especially if the parkette (P) application et perierunt illae quaestiones, in quibus mihi aliquando visus est units per hectare adversari sibi et non congruere testimoniis legis. In conclusion, I can find no reason not to deny this application.
(The Mayor and Clerk have been oblivious to the Latin in the speech, and, without missing a beat, they continue)

MAYOR: (aside) Mr...Mr... Mr. Robert? Where are we on the agenda? (squeak in voice)

CLERK: Well, I... ah... think, Mr. Mayor, it would be appropriate to open this matter up for discussion with the members of Council present before we go to the delegates. There are a number of delegates, but, I believe, that we can limit the time ... .

MAYOR: Quite, quite, Mr. Robert.
Members of Council? Anyone wish to make some comments?

(Sleymer raises her hand and is acknowledged by the Mayor)
MAYOR: Miss Sleymer?
SLEYMER: Thank you, Your Honour. I first want to congratulate Mr. Gaudet and his group, Arbuckle, on a job well done. I know that they've come a long way down a treacherous road to get here today. And they've a long way yet to go.
It's often an inclination to admit defeat in the face of difficult procedures and a maze of bureaucracies. But Mr. Gaudet and his colleagues have resisted this tendency and have fought to stay on track to achieve their goals. I admire that.
(becoming increasingly patriotic)
And there are several realities to the problems we encounter when we deal with non-profit housing. For the homeowner who perceives a property devaluation, that's a very real concern, and we as elected representatives must realize that. Similarly, though, the needs of our homeless and our poor are very real, too, and we must weigh the needs of the many against the needs of the few. But we are in the public service, after all. It is our **responsibility** to solve the problems of our citizens. That's our job. And if the problems don't reside in our shop, then we must help our citizens by providing them with options.
In planning issues, we frequently see proposals that meet the needs of the people. Unfortunately, they often do not meet the requirements on the books. I think we must strive to understand the intent of the rules that govern our planning. Thank you!
MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Sleymer. Are there other comments from Members of Council?
DUTSON: Yeah, yeah, yeah, I've got comments. My comment is, I'm up to here with everybody's heartbreaking soap-boxing. Everyone usually says something nice because it's not polite to speak your mind about this subject. The people who live in Dunlevy neighbourhood are concerned about the well-being of their homes and their investments. They were there first, and that's who we should be concerned about first. I've taken about all I can of this bleeding heart liberalism, Your Worship. I'm ready to vote now. I know the wishes of **my** constituents, and they don't want this kind of trash in their neighbourhood. Put them in Sleymer's ward if she's so sympathetic.
SLEYMER: Oh, come on, Dutson! You're always going on about knowing what **your** constituents want. Has it ever occurred to you (Dutson over top of Sleymer)
DUTSON: Your Worship... Your Worship... Your Worship... I thought I had the floor? I thought I had the floor? Is there no decorum... (keeps talking)
(Mayor bangs gavel repeatedly)
SLEYMER: that maybe some of your constituents **need** affordable housing? I know my constituents **need** affordable housing. I know my constituents often ask where their children are going to live. Let's look a little broader for once. After all, there's no election just yet, so why not try looking ahead of your nose for once. Show a little social responsibility!
MAYOR: Honourable Members of Council!!! Mr. Dutson, sit down. Miss Sleymer, please try to refrain from this type of talk.
(The Mayor bangs on a gavel for order, and the remaining councillors slowly begin to settle and take their seats)
MAYOR: May I remind Members of Council that a certain level of decorum has to be observed here. We do not wish this kind of display in public. Remember your position and your authority. Councillor Sleymer, I think you owe Council an apology.
DUTSON: Right on.
SLEYMER: Your Worship, Council, I apologize for my outburst. It was most unbecoming. But I wish it be known that I believe it is the undeniable responsibility of each and every one of us to maintain an even and unbiased point of view in matters of Council. We must remember whom we serve and to what ends.



MAYOR: So noted, Councillor Sleymer. (pause)
And Mr. Dutson, I would appreciate it if you would at least maintain a **semblance** of dignity during your ravings. I would like to think that Council members come here with an open mind, ready to listen to the facts without preconceived notions. Mr. Clerk? May we proceed?

CLERK: Yes, Your Worship. I have taken the names of those who wish to speak. There are four in attendance today, sir, and I might remind you that we are pressed for time.

MAYOR: Yes, quite.
(Looking at several pieces of paper in his hands, Mr. Robert calls the first speaker)

CLERK: Mr. Jones? Mr. Jones present, please?

JONES: Yeah — yeah, right here. Right here. Here I am.
(Jones gets up from the audience and makes his way toward the podium. "Excuse me, excuse me." He pauses and then opens up a rumpled piece of paper with handwriting on it.)

DUTSON: That a boy, Davie!

CLERK: You will address the Members of Council?

JONES: Yeah, yeah.

CLERK: Please refrain from looking at the press. We're ...

JONES: Yeah, yeah, ah, sorry ... sorry. Ah... . Ah... thanks for lettin' me speak, ah, here, today, ah, your, ah... y... y... Your Highness. I just wanna say a coupl'a things about, ah..., about this project that, ah..., your puttin'.
Ahhm, I been livin' in the neighbourhood, ah, for, for, many years, and I like it, I like it. My kids grew up here and went to school and everythin'. I think I coach a coupl'a your kids in Junior C, Your Reverence. Now I just heard that this Mr... this Mr. Gaudet... Gaudebt, or whatever his name is, was gonna put up a project for poor people. You know, where the government gives them money to move in and everything? Well, ahhm, don't get me wrong. I like poor people. I like poor people, an' all. There were a coupla' times in my life I figured myself for one. Ah, but, ah, I kept my nose to the sandstone, as they say. I worked ... I worked my ass off — yeah — and I got my money and paid my taxes. Now, now I can hold my head up on high 'cause I worked hard for my home, damn hard, yeah. I've owned it for these past five years now and, well ... well ... . I see it simply. If we give everything to these poor folks, then ... then they're gonna figure they'll get anythin' they need, anytime. Well, well, you and I know it don't work that way, Your Holiness. If you give these guys ev'rythin', then they'll never get no self respect or nothin'. How can a man hold up his head if he ain't worked for nothin? Hey, he can't, I don't think. See? You're not really helpin' him, after all. So I say to Mr. Gaudebt an' his group: Thanks, but no thanks.
Well... . Well, I think that's all I gotta say. Thank you very much.

CLERK: Thank you, Mr. Jones, for your comments. If you don't mind, on the way out, fill in a home slip, address for the records, sir?
(Mr. Robert motions Mr. Jones back to his seat in the audience)

JONES: But, before I go, ahhm, ahhm, Your Excellency, can I ask Mr. Gaudebt a coupla' questions, maybe?

MAYOR: Hmmm. It's most unusual, but I think under the circumstances we can allow it. Mr. Gaudet?
(Chris Gaudet rises from his seat and stands near his podium)

GAUDET: Mr. Jones?

JONES: How'd you do, Mr. Gaudet? Ah, I just wanted to ask ya, why'd you pick on my neighbourhood? Eh? Why? I mean, we all pay our taxes and everythin'. We look after our lawns. Why'd you want to put poor people in my backyard and wreck our neighbourhood?

GAUDET: Mr. Jones, I didn't pick your neighbourhood for any spiteful reason. The traffic allowances, public service access,

density allowances: They all make this area suitable for the type of housing project that we are proposing. The local services, shopping, doctors, schools, are in sufficient quantity to make the area ideal for the people who will likely be living in the development.

JONES: Yeah, that's fine an' everythin', but like I said, if we start givin' them handouts like this, they're gonna start expectin' it. When they don't get it, they might start takin' it. What kind of place will this be for any of us to live in if it gets like that? Huh? I mean, we don't need that. We like it the way it is. Yah. Why don't you try to put 'em somewhere else.

GAUDET: It is people exactly like yourself that are keeping poor people in the back alleys and public parks of Broma City, Mr. Jones. Do you hear what you're saying?
You care so much for their welfare that you're talking them right out of a home. Hiding behind our well-intentioned facades —

JONES: Hey, hey, hey. Just a minute. You can't talk like that. You don't live here.

MAYOR: Mr. Gaudet, would you stop from antagonizing the public with your comments?

GAUDET: Sorry, Your Worship. But let's put everything in perspective. All we're doing is giving a percentage of the tenants a break on their rents. It's not free housing; they're not being given something for nothing. Their rent is merely subsidized to make up for what their income lacks. The approximate amount they'll be paying out, in proportion to their income, is still enough to 'hurt.' And they care, Mr. Jones, they care very much.
(As Mr. Gaudet is concluding his speech, Dutson begins clapping his hands. Upon his finale, Dutson rises, still clapping)

DUTSON: Very nice. Very nice, indeed. He should really be writing soaps.
Your Worship, I have a couple of comments I would like to make to Council in response to Mr. Jones's enquiry — Davie's enquiry.

MAYOR: All right, Mr. Dutson. If you must.

DUTSON: Mr. Jones, first of all, I would like to apologize for the berating attitude of Mr. Gaudebt, but it seems he's afflicted with acute Socialism. (beat) Whether they care or not, Mr. Gaudet, is not the issue. It is not the issue. What is truly at the root of this is, Whose responsibility is it to provide housing? The onus to house the homeless is certainly not upon the understaffed, and underfunded, municipal governments. And it is most certainly not the responsibility of the property taxpayer. Your derisive remarks to Mr. Jones are out of place. He is a taxpayer (and a voter) and has every right to be concerned, to speak, and, if he can, to stop your project. It does little to help your case when you rebuke law-abiding voters in front of their peers. If this is the stand of management, what can we expect from the tenants?
Thank you, Your Worship, that's all I wish to say right now.

CLERK: (in background) Mr. Jones, will you go back to your seat, please?

MAYOR: Thank you, Mr. Dutson. ... Mr. Robert, may we continue with the agenda?

CLERK: Yes, Your Worship. Mrs. Claudia Enriquez? Is she in the audience, please? Mrs. Enriquez?

ENRIQUEZ: Oh..., oh, yes..., yes. (Enriquez raises her hand) Yes... I'm here. (Excuse me. Excuse me... . Oh, hi! Irwin!)
(She makes her way to the front of the audience and stands nervously before the podium. She looks expectantly at the Mayor, then his Clerk. When that produces little, she turns to the audience for guidance)

CLERK: Mrs. Enriquez? — Mrs. Enriquez? Yes, just speak into the microphone. The microphone, Mrs. Enriquez, please.

ENRIQUEZ: Oh.

CLERK: Do you understand English?

ENRIQUEZ: Yes. (taps on the mike) Oh, it works. Well, first I'd like to state that I'm here, not only on behalf of myself and husband, but also for Mrs. Endicott. You know, the lady that lives across the road from me?

MAYOR: So noted, Mrs. Enriquez.

ENRIQUEZ: Okay. Well, thank you. We live on George Street, just ike Mr. Jones, (Mr. Jones, hi!) and our property backs right onto the back of the proposed social housing development. Now, I realize that they have tried to make the area **look** like it's got the right setbacks, but, you know, no amount of trees and lawn is going to hide the fact that there is a government subsidized housing development in **my backyard**. And Mr. Tannenbaum? Mr. uhhm, wherever he is, well he **said** that he had **tried** to make the spot look attractive and, what I want to say to him is, Mr. Tannenbaum, try again! In fact, better still, forget it. Don't bother, 'cause we **don't want it**.

Now, I know it's not fashionable to oppose **public housing** in these hard times. But times aren't going to be so rough forever. And then what? Well, we'll have a project in **our backyard** that is lowering our property values every year. And these people could be living somewehere else.

Now, I don't really care who you think is responsible for housing in this country, Mr. ...

DUTSON: Right.

ENRIQUEZ: all that I care about is whether the **hard-earned** money that **I've** put in my home will be there next year.

SLEYMER: Excuse me. Mrs. Enriquez, for interrupting, but who told you that your property values were going to go down? Studies have been done to show that there isn't any propert devaluation. Were you aware of that information?

ENRIQUEZ: (hesitantly) Ahh ..., well ... that information ... . It came to me from a **responsible government source**.

(Enriquez casts a glance at Dutson)

DUTSON: Just to head off any lengthy debate on this, Your Worship, I have heard from **my** real estate agent, Joe McNichols, that the houses in the ward would suffer a slight devaluation if this project was approved.

SLEYMER: I suggest you consult with a source with less of an interest in the subject before you start your rumour-mongering in the future, Mr. **Dud**son! Why alarm the public with rumours? You're aware of the published facts; did you **choose** to ignore them?

DUTSON: Those studies of propery values are **just studies**. They are probably done in Toronto, or the United States! There are a hundred reports reporting thousands of facts. I think that this is a case where what's on the books is exactly what the people need! Why should we change the rules now?

MAYOR: Please continue, Mrs. Enriquez.

ENRIQUEZ: Well, I had been pretty sure that my information was correct. But, even so, I'm not convinced of the practicality of this project. There's plenty of other reasons. Uhhm ... . Like I said, it is much too **cramped** for the size of this development. I think Mr. Tannenbaum has put too many units on, just to make more money. And I'm sure that the tenants will be bringing **children** into the neighbourhood. And, you know, Your Worship, that really few of the families here now **have** children. And ... and there'll be no-one for them to play with. And then they'll be lonely, and they might not be welcomed at the school because they don't have any friends. And we would be doing them a disservice to let them move into this type of neighbourhood. They need to grow up in a place where there's lots of kids. Our neighbourhood isn't for them, Your Worship. Put the project somewhere else.

MAYOR: Thank you, Mrs. Enriquez.

ENRIQUEZ: Oh ... . Oh, yes.

CLERK: Mrs. Enriquez, you may step down. We will need your name and your address and your ...
ENRIQUEZ: Oh, I'd like to ... you remember that I'm speaking for my husband
MAYOR: Yes, Mrs. Enriquez.
ENRIQUEZ: and Mrs. Endicott.
MAYOR: Yes, Mrs. Enriquez. Thank you very much. Thank you. Mr. Robert?
ROBERT: Mr. Cadesky? Mr. Cadesky, would you like to come forward?
(Cadesky approaches the podium)
CADESKY: Thank you, Your Worship. My name is Sam Cadesky, and I teach at the high school in Dunlevy. I grew up in Broma City, and I guess I know a couple of you. Currently, I'm the president of the Dunlevy Ratepayers Association, and it is in that capacity that I am here this evening. I don't really want to get into the politics of this situation because, as Mrs. Enriquez — I think it was — said, it really isn't very fashionable to object to any kind of housing project for the poor. But I've got a few concerns that I'd like Council to consider. First of all, I've got a petition signed by 27 of the neighbours against this project. When I moved to Dunlevy myself, I chose the location because of its proximity to the school. And I was told that the lot behind my house was going to be a parkette.
SLEYMER: Ah, who told you that, Mr. Cadesky?
CADESKY: My realtor. But I know what you're getting at. Yeah, I was a little skeptical, so I checked the Official Plan, here at City Hall, and sure enough, the whole area was to be single-family residential with a parkette at the back of my property. But all of a sudden, now, you're changing the rules. You're telling me that the investment I made 10 years ago is in jeopardy. Even if the property values don't come down with a social housing project in my backyard, or so I hear in the debate today, what about the traffic? What will the neighbourhood be like with the increased traffic and a low-rise building in the area? No matter what 'landscaping' you do, now can you hide a five-storey building? You're changing the character of my neighbourhood, and **your** neighbourhood, when you change the rules. If you're going to change the Official Plan every time you have something put before you, why have it in the first place? Stick to your guns, and keep things as they are.
That's all I really have to say right now. I hope that common sense will prevail here. I'd like to help Mr. Gaudet out, but I think he's chosen the wrong place for his good works. There's got to be better place for this type of development. Maybe Council can help stear them in the proper direction. Thank you.
(Cadesky hands his petition to the clerk, Mr. Robert)
MAYOR: Thank you, Mr. Cadesky. Ah, Mr. Robert?
CLERK: There is only one more speaker, Your Worship. Ahh ... Judy Winslow. Is Mrs. Winslow here, please?
WINSLOW: Yes, Your Worship, here.
CLERK: Mrs. Winslow, will you come up to the podium?
(Judy Winslow rises from the audience and approaches the podium. It is evident that she is about eight months pregnant. She slowly navigates her way to the front of the chambers)
WINSLOW: My name is Judy Winslow, and I live in a rooming house downtown. I was widowed late last year; it was quite a shock. Until my pregnancy makes it too hard for me, I'll keep working. I have to because money's tight.
You all make me so angry. I've been listening to you all talk about the **types** of people that live in social housing. I even heard Mrs. Enriquez before she stood up tell the lady beside her that the kids in the housing project would lower the **IQs** of her kids! You make your speeches, tell everyone where to go and what to do, and where does it get us?
And you say the most incredible things. You're so frightened of

people you don't even know. If I'd just walked in off the street, I'd think you were talking about prison, not non-profit housing. What kind of people do you think live in a project? Do they have two heads? Six arms to steal hub caps and three legs to run away from the cops?

The typical tenant is standing right in front of you. I'm an applicant for this housing project. I have the right number of arms and legs, no handcuffs on or needle tracks. The typical resident is me. I'm the type of person you're trying to keep out.

I don't want to preach to you. I think you're good people. But I don't think you care. Not one bit. Not about me. As Members of Council, and this community, you should be providing people like me with what **we** need. Just stop and think about what you're doing sometimes. Think about why you are where you are. If you're truly here to help people, **all the people**, like you keep saying, then do it.

And to you, Mrs. Enriquez, I'd like to say one thing. When you're complaining that the setback isn't acceptable to your barbeque needs, or that the property value is going down on a house you'll probably never sell, just remember that you may only be a husband away from social housing yourself.

Thank you, Mayor Casselli.

MAYOR: Thank you, Mrs. Winslow. Are there any further delegates?

(Robert indicates the negative)

Then I believe it would be appropriate to put this zoning change to the vote. If you would do the honours, Mr. Robert.

CLERK: Certainly. The proposal reads: A zoning amendment to PD 12543/65 — Zone Change Application — Arbuckle Non-Profit Housing Corporation, for the property at 987 George Street at the corner of George and Victoria Streets. The specifics of the zone application will permit 43 non-profit housing units to be developed on the site.

MAYOR: All those in favour?

(The lights go off before the vote is taken)

REGULATING TENURE CONVERSIONS

RÉGLEMENTATION DE LA CONVERSION

Dan Burns (Chair)
Commissioner of Housing
City of Toronto

Serge Carreau
Assistant Manager
Housing and Urban Development
City of Montréal

Susan Taylor
Co-ordinator
Rental Housing Protection Program
Ontario Ministry of Housing

Francine Dansereau
Professor, INRS-Urbanisation
Montréal, Québec

Municipal and provincial governments are having to decide on how best to manage their existing rental stock. The governments of Ontario and Quebec, and more recently the City of Montreal, have proposed contrasting policies. These respective strategies are analyzed and debated in this session.

Les gouvernements municipaux et provinciaux ont récemment eu à prendre des décisions difficiles quant au mode le plus efficace pour gérer le parc de logements locatifs. Les gouvernements de l'Ontario et du Québec, et plus récemment la ville de Montréal, ont proposé des politiques différentes en cette matière. Dans cet atelier nous comparons leurs stratégies respectives et le contexte dans lequel elles ont été élaborées.

In opening the session, the chair, Dan Burns, told the audience that the presentation would take the form of a tale of two cities — Montreal and Toronto — as panelists discussed the way that these two cities and their provincial governments have been looking at the mounting problem of tenure conversion of the private rental housing stock.

As assistant manager of housing and urban development in the City of Montreal, Serge Carreau is fundamentally responsible for the city's housing policy and program operations. Having worked as an architect for the provincial and federal governments, and with a long career in housing, Carreau is well acquainted with the controversial issues surrounding rental conversions. In opening the session, he acknowledged the difficulty in talking about converting rental housing into condominiums without referring to general housing orientations, as this issue involves the management of the rental housing stock and the objectives pursued through this type of production.

"Traditionally, in Western countries," said Carreau, "rental housing has always been considered as a way of providing affordable and adequate housing for households lacking the financial means to access housing. Rent control measures, as well as measures aimed at providing minimum protection to tenants, are the logical conclusion to this vision of rental housing."

In a market perspective, conversion is considered a good way of increasing the cost-effectiveness of the rental housing stock and, therefore, investments, and of providing more opportunities

"If we want to ensure tenant protection and preserve the affordable housing stock, conversion can be used to increase the opportunities for access to housing."

for access to housing in highly urbanized areas. With such objectives, conversion produces major "side effects;" it can result in a decrease in affordable housing units, place moderate-income tenants in a vulnerable situation, and globally reduce the redistribution of the housing stock.

On the other hand, stressed Carreau, "if we want to ensure tenant protection and preserve the affordable housing stock," conversion can also be seen as a means of increasing the opportunities for access to housing.

Having posited a general introduction about conversions, Carreau then went on to describe the City of Montreal's policy objectives relating to this issue. The city, he said, is proposing two objectives based on Montreal's specific housing characteristics, and aimed at both bringing out its intrinsic qualities and correcting its major weaknesses.

To benefit fully from having direct access to employment, educational, cultural, and business opportunities, and health services, the populace must be able to make housing choices. Thus, prices and rents must remain affordable.

Traditionally, a vast majority of Montreal's population have been tenants. Still today, only 25 per cent of all households are homeowners, while the proportion of homeowners stands at 55 per cent province-wide. On the other hand, the number of households living in co-operative housing is minimal compared to the total population. Therefore, surmised Carreau, "the population of Montreal is disadvantaged individually and collectively."

The residential housing stock in Montreal is a vast reservoir of adequate and affordable housing in all areas. Even in downtown neighbourhoods, rents and property prices compare favourably with Canadian and American standards. Maintaining these assets is the best way of promoting access to the quality of life available in Montreal.

Having said this, Carreau stressed that the city's first objective is to ensure that a larger number of households can become homeowners, individually and collectively. That housing be affordable and adequate is a second objective of the city, which believes firmly in its citizens having better control of their housing conditions.

Since 75 per cent of Montreal households are tenants and since most of these households are in the moderate-income bracket, the issue of conversion was addressed in the general context of the management of the existing stock and not as an isolated issue.

In terms of strategy, the city wishes to promote individual and collective access to housing, but it also wants to keep the people in their own environment.

To reach the first objective, said Carreau, "it is essential to use the existing rental housing stock and not rely only on new construction. But the city wishes to do this without adversely affecting tenants who do not want or cannot afford to become homeowners. New construction, since it only represents some 7,000 units in a good year out of the 460,000 existing units (most of these are rental units at about 40 per cent), cannot have a very significant impact on increasing the proportion of homeowners in relation to total households. On the other hand, the rental stock, in terms of its size, diversity, and price, offers many opportunities both for individual access to housing and collective purchasing."

Finally, the city does not rely only on conversion but also on programs allowing tenants to purchase housing collectively through co-operatives or non-profit organizations.

In Quebec, condominiums have only been permitted since the beginning of the 1970s, following amendments to the Civil Code. Their impact on the existing housing stock, felt at the beginning of 1975, was "so negative" that the Government of Quebec decreed a moratorium in December of that year. The moratorium was maintained until December 1987, with adjustments made in 1981 to limit the right of joint owners to regain possession of units in buildings of four or less units. Yet, despite this moratorium, many housing units were converted in Montreal — more than 10,000 — by using measures that circumvented the law, such as holding joint properties and evicting tenants to conduct major repairs.

In December 1987, after 12 years, the Government of Quebec adopted new and stronger legislation respecting conversions:

- an indefinite guarantee that pre-conversion tenants will remain in place;
- the right of refusal for existing tenants; and
- increased protection in the event of eviction for major repair purposes and in cases of harassment.

Conversion is still prohibited on the Montreal Urban Community territory, but MUC municipalities have the power to lift this prohibition by approving regulations and, through special dispensation, by authorizing conversions within the above-mentioned framework. Where conversion is authorized in other Quebec municipalities, these jurisdictions have the power to prohibit this practice totally or partially. Therefore, "municipalities have the right to say 'yes' or 'no' to conversion, but the government determines how it should be done in all cases," said Carreau.

This 1987 legislation is a result of lobbying by tenant groups, especially senior citizens, and a number of municipalities, including Montreal, during the consultation process undertaken by the minister responsible for the draft legislation. With such a framework, conversion is possible, but implementation is very complex and may take several years to achieve. Outside the Island of Montreal, few applications for conversion have been submitted, and it is not certain the cases where permits were granted have resulted in joint property registration within the one-year deadline prescribed by the law. One municipality has already limited conversions significantly; others are planning to do so shortly.

None of the MUC municipalities have adopted regulations to lift the prohibition. Only the City of Montreal has announced its intention to do so.

During the public consultation process on the draft legislation, the City of Montreal had proposed that conversion be generally prohibited and that this prohibition be lifted under exceptional circumstances, as set down by clear criteria. Although the Government of Quebec supports Montreal's position, it decided to give municipalities some leeway.

To increase the opportunities for a larger number of households to access housing, the city believes that the existing rental housing stock is the main resource, given the high cost of new housing. Few tenant households in Montreal have the financial capacity to buy a new house, but if existing rental units are used, this becomes possible for many.

Nevertheless, the city does not want conversion if it is done at the expense of households who cannot acquire their own housing

"Ontario's policy objective of protecting the rental housing stock directly conflicts with any objective to provide homeownership opportunities by converting this stock."

"Current tenants and their advocates are the only ones directly affected by the conversion issue and the only ones whose motives are socially legitimate. The added value pocketed by the converter or the owner-investor is obviously not socially legitimate."

and if it contributes to a price increase. In Montreal's case, however, the scarcity of the rental stock is not at issue because the vacancy rate is generally above three per cent and nearly four per cent of the 7,000 housing starts implemented each year are rental units. In addition, since conversion is limited to tenants who wish to buy their own housing, each time a housing unit is converted, there is one less tenant searching for rental housing. On the other hand, the impact that conversion could have on some buildings and for senior citizens remains a problem.

"In this context," said Carreau, "the city has proposed that conversion be made possible only when at least 60 per cent of the tenants in a building agree to become owners and when applications for conversion in any given year do not exceed one per cent of the rental stock in one area." In addition, to make it easier for tenants to purchase their own housing, the city intends to offer a property tax credit over five years. This will represent approximately $5,000 in assistance.

To these requirements, standards associated with the physical conditions of the buildings will be implemented.

In conclusion, Careau told the audience that the proposed conversion policy has been criticized by senior citizens' groups and other advocacy groups for low-income households. Despite the protection offered by the law and the strict restraining measures, senior citizens are still concerned about possible adverse effects. "It is difficult to please everyone," he said.

As co-ordinator of the Rental Housing Protection Program for the Ontario Ministry of Housing, Susan Taylor's detailed presentation dealt specifically with Ontario's Rental Housing Protection Act (RHPA) and its regulation of the conversion of rental residential properties to condominium and co-operative tenures.

Passed in 1986 as a temporary measure as a response to the erosion of the rental housing stock through conversions, demolitions, and luxury renovations, said Taylor, RHPA has already received first reading as Bill 211, the act's very similar, permanent replacement legislation.

In terms of RHPA 1986 provisions, Taylor listed a number of activities that cannot be carried out without municipal council approval, including: demolition; conversion to condominium, co-operative, or any other use for a purpose other than rental residential property; renovation or repair; subdivision of rental residential property under the Planning Act; sale of a share or interest in a co-operative; evictions of tenants for demolition, conversion, or for uses other than rental; and repairs or renovations so extensive that they would require a vacant possession.

To approve an application, said Taylor, council must find that one of the following three criteria has been met:

1. the property is unsafe and unfit for human habitation;
2. the applicant agrees to provide comparable new rental units in the same area and comparable alternative housing for existing tenants; and
3. the proposal does not adversely affect the supply of affordable rental housing in the municipality (with regard to applications for condominium conversion, the majority of approvals thus far have been based on this criterion).

Taylor added, however, that there are a number of exemptions from the act, including:

- municipalities with populations over 25,000, except in the case of an application for conversion to condominium. (The act requires council approval for all condominium conversions in the province, but in municipalities of under 25,000, the council is not required to apply the criteria outlined earlier);
- vacant buildings;
- rental properties containing four or less residential units, except in the case of conversion to condominiums; and
- buildings that had received draft approval for conversion to condominiums before the act was enforced.

Taylor briefly summarized the application process: The property owner submits an application to the municipal clerk and notifies the tenants that application has been made; the municipality circulates the application for comment, then holds a public meeting after notifying the tenants and the general public; council makes its decision, and, if the application is approved, conditions may be imposed; council's decision may be appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board by any person, and the board's decision can be appealed to provincial cabinet by one of the parties to the board hearing; and if an application is approved, the municipal clerk ensures that any conditions have been fulfilled and issues an approval certificate indicating approval both under the RHPA 1986 and under the province's Condominium Act. At this point, eviction notices can be served to tenants in accordance with the Landlord and Tenant Act, and any other necessary permits or approvals can be obtained.

According to Taylor, a government might have a number of possible policy objectives in regulating tenure conversions, including: retention of existing rental housing stock; tenant protection; improvement of the physical condition of the housing stock; consumer protection; and provision of homeownership opportunities.

When introducing RHPA 1986 into the legislature, said Taylor, the then Minister of Housing made the following statement:

> There is an urgent need to preserve the existing supply of rental housing in many areas of our province and to protect the security of tenants in this accommodation.

Clearly, the primary policy objectives of the government at that time were stock and tenant protection.

Looking back over the two-and-a-half years since the act came into force, Taylor expressed the view that RHPA 1986 has effectively limited condominium conversions in Metropolitan Toronto and Ottawa and thus retained the existing rental housing stock. Only five applications for condominium conversion, affecting 63 units, have been approved in the Toronto area; one, affecting nine units, in the Ottawa area. In other areas, however, local councils have reacted more favourably to applications. As of January 1989, applications for condominium conversions affecting 1,619 units had been approved by local councils province-wide.

"The combination of tenant rights to participate and appeal and the council's authority to require conditions," said Taylor,

"Montreal has proposed that conversion be possible only when at least 60 per cent of the tenants agree to become owners."

"has led to significant tenant protections being required by councils when they approve conversion applications. In a large number of cases where condominium conversions have been approved, existing tenants have obtained security of tenure guarantees ranging from two years to a lifetime."

Since the renovation of rental properties is also regulated by RHPA 1986, Taylor said, renovations to upgrade properties before conversion, and therefore economic eviction as a result of rent increases, has not been a problem, although it has not yet been determined if renovations after conversion with subsequent large rent increases will become a problem for the remaining tenants. In general, the converted buildings have been newer, good-quality properties not immediately needing major work.

"Because tenants can strongly influence the decisions of their municipal councils, owners generally do not bring forward for conversion those buildings that will require major renovations and, subsequently, rent increases. As a result," said Taylor, "not much of an improvement has been made in the physical condition of the housing stock that has been converted."

"In Ontario, in many cases where condominium conversions have been approved, existing tenants have obtained security of tenure guarantees."

Although RHAP 1986 gives municipal council the authority to require an engineer's or architect's report on a property's condition and structural safety — a provision that could allow a municipality to ensure that consumer information is made available to prospective purchasers of condominium units — Taylor told the audience the provision has seldom been used for this purpose. And while the Ontario Condominium Act contains a number of features designed as consumer protection measures, including standard requirements for disclosure before sales, operation of a condominium corporation, and establishment of capital reserve funds for future capital replacements, neither it nor RHPA 1986 addresses consumer concerns that can arise when an older building is being divided and sold. These include the need for larger capital reserve fund contributions than the statutory minimum and the fact that, by retaining ownership of a majority of the units in a building, an owner may be in control of the condominium corporation.

"Average prices for condominium units are considerably lower than most forms of freehold units," said Taylor, "and thus, it is argued, provide the opportunity for lower-income households who would otherwise be unable to afford to purchase to own a home and build equity. However, the province's policy objective of protecting the stock of rental housing is in direct conflict with any objective of providing homeownership opportunities by converting rental stock." In effect, therefore, RHPA 1986 has restricted the supply of converted units at a time when the condominium market has been booming in Ontario. In the six months immediately preceding the act's passage, more than 1,500 units in the province were converted to condominiums, while only 1,619 units have been converted to this tenure in the two-and-a-half years since.

"In conclusion," said Taylor, "RHPA 1986 gives local municipalities the ability to protect their supplies of existing rental housing and tenants in that stock. Municipal councils' approaches to decisions on conversion applications have varied, with some emphasizing protection of the stock and refusing approvals, and others allowing conversions but ensuring that non-purchasing tenants receive some degree of protection. Overall, the act has placed significant restraints on tenure conversions while maintaining sufficient flexibility to take local market conditions into account."

In her assessment of the issue of tenure conversions in Quebec and Ontario, Francine Dansereau, a professor at INRS-Urbanisation in Montréal, pointed out that, "in spite of different premises and different arguments, the end results are quite similar."

Basically, she said, both cities have opted to protect the residential stock and the current tenants, putting aside or giving less importance to increasing access to housing and improving the stock and, indirectly, the local tax base. Referring to a comment made on the draft legislation tabled in Quebec in November 1987, Dansereau said:

> Faced with the difficulty of conciliating the interests of owners-investors, promoters, and tenants who are candidates to homeownership with those of current and potential tenants, the Minister has basically opted for the latter two categories, returning the ball in the hands of the municipalities.

This conclusion is still valid — "and even more so if we compare it to Ontario's situation, where the primary objective is the protection of the rental stock." Homeownership comes at the end of the list, Dansereau added. This priority is justified by two conditions or circumstances:

- a very tight market, created by active demographic and economic growth and the stifling of new housing supply; and
- the disappearance of units through demolition, conversion into pseudo-hotels, and other forms of short-term rental or non-residential uses.

The loss of any rental unit must receive the approval of the municipality, which, once it has complied with provincial guidelines, has vast discretionary powers. In Ontario, said Dansereau, provincial legislation with respect to conversion leaves many doors open that the Quebec legislation has closed. Most noteworthy are the following:

- vacant buildings: exempted in Ontario; in Quebec, any building that included at least one housing unit during the 10 years preceding the date of application for conversion is subject to the scrutiny of the Régie du logement;
- buildings of four or less units are not subject to the Ontario legislation, except in cases of conversion from rental to condominium. In Quebec, these buildings are also subject to the guarantee of maintaining current tenants in their units in cases of de facto conversion into joint properties (major breach used to bypass the moratorium until the end of 1987). The transformation of these buildings into non-residential uses, when zoning by-laws permit, escapes all control measures; and
- the right for tenants to remain in their units, if the application for conversion is approved, is not guaranteed in the Ontario legislation; in the Québec legislation, this

right is guaranteed at the time of conversion. The procedures used in Ontario and the importance given to tenant complaints are such that municipalities are actually requiring an almost absolute right for tenants to remain in their units.

Therefore, pointed out Dansereau, the end result is quite similar. "Without getting into the details of the respective legislations and regulations, it is clear that Quebec's legislation is rather restrictive and enforced by a central agency (the Régie du logement). The Ontario legislation provides a basic framework, which seems rather liberal at the provincial level, that gives considerable leeway to municipalities, who, in turn, apply additional constraints and restrictions."

Interestingly, with such a limited framework, Dansereau told the audience that Quebec governments during the past 10 years have successively reactivated the conversion issue, with the aim of promoting homeownership. Protection of the rental stock seemed a secondary objective, since the construction of new rental units was going well and the vacancy rate seemed comfortable.

"In my opinion," said Dansereau, "current tenants and their advocates (who are also concerned with future tenants and, therefore, with maintaining the stock) are the only ones directly affected and the only ones whose motives are socially legitimate. The added value pocketed by the converter or the owner-investor is obviously not socially legitimate."

She concluded her remarks by comparing the two urban societies, Toronto and Montreal. "In Ontario, the interests of current and potential tenants are given consideration at the municipal level, where restrictions are being implemented. This ground is more fragile, but it does not reflect the situation of the dominating majorities in the two urban societies: a 'property-owned democracy' on one side (Ontario) and a 'tenant population' on the other (Quebec)."

MAKING HOUSING ACCESSIBLE

FACILITER L'ACCESSIBILITÉ AU LOGEMENT

Chaviva Hosek
Minister of Housing/Ministre du Logement
Province of Ontario

As an overall strategy for tackling its own province's housing affordability crisis, the Ontario Ministry of Housing has embarked on numerous initiatives. While each addresses specific situations, all concentrate on improving the supply of affordable housing. In her luncheon address, Chaviva Hosek elaborated on her government's progressive housing program.

Comme stratégie globale en vue de faire face au problème d'abordabilité qui sévit dans sa propre province, la ministre du Logement de l'Ontario a envisagé diverses initiatives. Même si chacune de ces initiatives touche des situations précises, elles visent toutes à accroître le nombre de logements abordables. Dans son allocution, Mme Chaviva Hosek a décrit plus en détail le programme de logement progressif adopté par son gouvernement.

Access to housing is a major concern of Ontario's, said the Honourable Chaviva Hosek, Ontario's Minister of Housing, in her opening remarks to delegates attending the Monday luncheon. And because of this concern, the Ontario government is prepared to meet the "challenge of providing adequate and affordable housing for all Ontarians."

Despite its sixth consecutive year of economic growth and the creation of more than 100,000 jobs each year, the sad fact, stressed Hosek, is that Ontario's housing situation has reached a critical stage. Consider the following facts:

- over one-quarter million households spend more than 30 per cent of their income on housing;
- close to 40,000 families are on waiting lists for social housing;
- as many as 20,000 people a year use the province's emergency shelters; and
- homeownership has become increasingly more difficult to achieve for many families.

According to Hosek, several reasons have created this predicament. "Our booming economy has made us a magnet for people from all over the country: In 1987 alone, approximately 110,000 people migrated to Ontario. This huge influx, along with other demographic shifts, such as the increase in one-parent households and the coming of age of the baby boom generation, has had an enormous impact on the availability and, consequently, the affordability of housing in the province."

Thus, said Hosek, "if Ontario is to enjoy continued growth, we have to be able to accommodate" the housing needs of all our citizens.

Hosek then elaborated on the varying characteristics of affordability: housing for the homeless and those whose incomes or lack

"While giving money to people through the tax system to allow them to more easily afford to buy homes is a good idea, it makes little sense in an atmosphere where there is a serious lack of supply. That is, it's not great planning to give people money to buy something that isn't available."

of one do not permit them to afford housing without assistance; housing for people who could afford reasonable rental accommodation if it were available to them; and housing for people who want to own their own homes.

"As a provincial government," said Hosek, "we resolved several years ago to do something about the housing situation in Ontario. But far from simply paying lipservice to the problem, we committed ourselves to a long-term plan of action. We weren't looking for quick-fix methods that may win us popularity but do little to turn the tide of the housing patterns that had developed."

"Instead, we resolved to enact a broad, long-term vision of housing that would ensure access to housing for people today and in the future."

For this reason, the majority of the housing initiatives introduced by the province concentrate on supply rather than demand. "It's not great planning to give people money to buy something that isn't available."

Hosek provided a synopsis for the audience of the types of programs and initiatives implemented by the province: non-profit housing production programs funded entirely by Ontario tax dollars; a comprehensive housing strategy designed to aggressively address the availability and affordability of housing; increasing the supply of affordable housing and the land on which to build; preserving, revitalizing, and intensifying the existing housing stock; developing partnerships with other levels of government, the building industry, and community groups; and making loans available to hundreds of groups to build high-quality, non-profit housing.

The province's strategy of working with community groups is working, said Hosek. "By letting the community build and maintain the housing, we are getting marvellous results. ... We are helping to build housing that really works."

Although the province's multiple strategies — including its 'Housing First' policy and regulatory reform program — have helped to alleviate the housing affordability crisis, said Hosek, "alone, they have not been enough."

Hosek stressed that, "to ensure such housing is consistently available, commitment and long-term planning by all municipalities is required." For this reason, the province developed a housing and land use policy statement that will see all municipalities plan for a full range of housing types in their communities, including a minimum of 25 per cent affordable housing in all new residential developments. A policy, not a prescription, the statement, said Hosek, "provides a framework for balanced and structured growth that municipalities must translate into real, workable blueprints for their communities."

Considering the changing demographic character of North American society — from one of large families to that of smaller households — it is important that municipalities and housing planners recognize the vast housing resource available in the existing stock. Hosek cited basement and attic apartments, home-sharing, single-family home conversion to duplexes, and granny flats as viable ways of using the existing larger family homes more effectively. She said, "With relatively little expense, we can make better use of that existing housing and create housing for many more people without over-burdening the existing services. Through initiatives such as the housing policy statement, we're encouraging intensification and infill."

However, despite all these measures of progress in the fight against housing inadequacy and homelessness, Hosek reminded

the delegates of the one major obstacle still standing in the way of housing advocates — the 'Not In My Backyard' syndrome. "Despite the fact that NIMBY is almost always based on what I call 'mythinformation'," said Hosek, "its power is not to be underestimated. Far too often, the cry of NIMBY has succeeded in delaying and even terminating proposals for deperately-needed housing."

Hosek said that the province has "to take the NIMBY factor as seriously as any other obstacle to housing production. We have to fight the fear and ignorance that provokes it and the influence it wields with education, support, and involvement."

Several tools to assist the ministry in its efforts to fight NIMBY attitudes include: a recent study that clearly demonstrates non-profit housing has absolutely no negative effect on property values; and a recently-implemented housing advocacy task force whose mandate is to promote the acceptance of social and affordable housing. Speaking about the positive effects of this task force, Hosek told the delegates that direct intervention by the task force has paid off, with decisions having been made in favour of affordable housing. Also, the task force is constantly working at creating partnerships and coalitions in the community that would assume responsibility for advocacy, outreach, and public education.

"This advocacy role," said Hosek, "is vital and critical to our comprehensive housing strategy. It is naive to think that we could say to the community, 'Here's some money, go and build housing,' when we know that, more often than not, they need help to actually get the housing built that is needed so badly."

In conclusion, the Ontario Minister of Housing encouraged the active participation of all sectors of the housing market in the provision and promotion of affordable housing.

"Despite our efforts, there is still a great deal of community opposition to affordable housing in Ontario. There are still groups of people, even whole municipalities, resistant to building affordable housing within their boundaries."

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD: AN "ACCESS" ROUTE

LOGEMENTS AVEC SERVICES DANS LES QUARTIERS: UNE VOIE «D'ACCÈS»

Nellie Manley (Chair)
Program Director, Supportive Housing in Peel Program
Canadian Mental Health Association

Stella Andriopoulos
Executive Director
Ottawa Salus Corporation

William Grant
President
John Howard Society of New Brunswick

René Rouleau
Department Head, Support for Community Organizations
Department of Health and Social Services
Province of Québec

Different approaches are being taken to achieve the successful integration of supportive housing projects into neighbourhoods. Examples include two of the hardest-to-house groups: those with mental health problems and ex-offenders.

Diverses stratégies visent à intégrer des projets de logement en milieu de soutien au sein des quartiers. Parmi les cas cités en exemples, deux des groupes les plus difficiles à loger: les personnes ayant des problèmes de santé mentale et les ex-détenus et ex-détenues.

The presentation by Stella Andriopoulos, executive director of the Ottawa Salus Corporation, was a poignant example of the difficulties a group can encounter when trying to construct a supportive housing facility in an established, and fearful, community.

Andriopoulos gave a detailed account of the Ottawa Salus Corporation's recent experience in establishing a 20-bed group home for the psychiatrically disabled. "Although the purpose of this workshop is to focus on the successful integration of social housing projects into neighbourhoods," she began, "from my point of view, the jury is still out on how successful the integration of this particular group home has been." Indeed, after an entire year in operation, the home's integration is still ongoing and has yet to be evaluated.

The Ottawa Salus Corporation is a non-profit housing organization providing supervised living and rehabilitation programs for men and women recovering from psychiatric illness. The group's first home opened in April 1979; today it operates two halfway houses, the group home that was the focus of Andriopoulos's discourse, and eight co-operative group residences or apartments for former psychiatric patients across Ottawa. It was in 1982, Andriopoulos told the audience, that Salus first put forward its plan for a longer-term residential facility for more severely psychiatrically-disabled adults to the Ontario Ministry of Health, Community Mental Health Branch. With a staff to resident ratio of two to one, the facility would offer a residential program in combination with life and social skills training over a period of 18 to 24 months in an effort to help the clients integrate more successfully into the community. In January 1986, six years later, word was received that the Ministry of Health had allocated support funding for this program.

By September of that year, the Ontario Ministry of Housing had given preliminary approval for the project to begin its developmental stage under the ministry's non-profit special needs allocations. DASH Loan funding was advanced by the ministry so Salus could hire a housing consuitant and an architect to prepare for the initial planning and design of the home.

Soon after, Salus began searching for a suitable location, eventually choosing a property that sported a duplexed home on Fisher Avenue in Ottawa. "The board of directors established a small subcommittee for the design and development of the home," said Andriopoulos, "and, in consultation with the architect, the proposal that received preliminary approval for funding a few months later from the Ministry of Housing suggested the existing duplex be demolished and a new, three-storey, 20-bed home be erected."

The next step was to obtain the necessary approvals from the City of Ottawa. "At that time," said Andriopoulos, "the group home by-law allowed for the establishment of a group home in a residential neighbourhood, such as the one in which the Fisher Avenue property was located. The only stipulation was that the home be located at least 300 metres distant from any other group home. There were no conditions in the by-law outlining the maximum number of residents that could be housed."

As soon as an agreement to purchase the property on Fisher Avenue was signed by both the owner and Salus, Andriopoulos and another board member approached the ward's alderperson to explain Salus's plans. "At that time," related Andriopoulos, "the alderperson was receiving a lot of complaints about other privately-run boarding homes for the psychiatrically disabled in his ward." In addition, a great deal of unfavourable press coverage was being given to several other social housing facilities in the area: a home for people recovering from alcohol addiction that had expanded its client base from 10 to 20; several homes for young offenders that were experiencing development difficulties; and a halfway house for ex-offenders in which there had just been a murder. Notwithstanding all of this, said Andriopoulos, the alderperson, although wary, was not entirely unsympathetic to Salus's plans initially, and the organization of a community-wide information campaign began. (Meanwhile, Andriopoulos met with Salus staff and clients in separate meetings to elicit their ideas about the design, decor, and use of space in the proposed group home. Their combined ideas, she said, were conveyed to the architect and used, and later

"Although the purpose of this workshop is to focus on the successful integration of the social housing projects into neighbourhoods, from my point of view, the jury is still out on how successful the integration of this particular group home has been."

"There was clearly a misunderstanding of the mentally ill and the type of client we would be housing, as evidenced by community fear of potential client violence. They feared their children would be molested ... the crime rate in their neighbourhood would increase ... and property values would decrease."

served to illustrate to the community the integrity of the home's design.

In December 1986, Salus applied to the City of Ottawa to register the property as a group home. The city's planning office confirmed that the chosen site could be eligible — it was indeed 300 metres away from an existing group home — but that the demolition permit and the site plan approval process had to be completed before registration would be received.

In the interim, Salus was obliged to renegotiate the offer to purchase on the property. "Initially," said Andriopoulos, "we established the offer to purchase conditional on obtaining the group home certificate. We then rewrote the offer to be conditional on obtaining the building permit as that would be the last approval we needed. The closing date had to be changed three times. Fortunately, we had a very flexible seller because we didn't actually get our building permit until eight months later."

In early December of that year, Salus undertook a door-to-door community information campaign and distributed information packages to 70 households in the neighbourhood. Included in the package were the following items: an invitation to attend a public community meeting (the organization of which was a condition set by the alderperson, although such a meeting was not required by any by-laws or conditions that were set by the City of Ottawa); a description of the typical resident who would be living in the home; an explanation of the need for such a home; an outline of the goals of the program; a description of the types of staff positions and their associated duties; and a list of the board of directors, attached to a detailed outline that explained the reasons for choosing the Fisher Avenue location.

"The date and location of the community meeting was set in consultation with the alderperson," said Andriopoulos, "and with other area community leaders whom the alderperson had suggested should be contacted as our plans became public." Follow-up reminders for the meeting were distributed door to door to the same 70 households, and a small advertisement was run in the local community newspaper before the meeting.

At the same time, Salus was proceeding with its capital cost budget as required by the Ministry of Housing, and the architect's preliminary concept plans, etc., were being submitted. In mid-December, Salus received its first letter from the legal counsel for the Ottawa Concerned Citizens of Carlington (OCCC). With the letter, the ad hoc group was hoping to delay the public meeting until March of the following year in order to obtain further information concerning Salus and its proposal. "We refused, with the support of the alderperson," said Andriopoulos, "to delay the meeting as we had already been accused of not getting the facts out to the public quickly enough. We felt that any delay would further rile a certain number of people in the community."

The day before the public meeting, the alderperson, in consort with a photographer and an editor of the local newspaper, conducted door-to-door interviews with the occupants of homes in the neighbourhoods of Salus's two existing facilities to determine how community members felt about the organization and the way it operated its homes. "There were no complaints," said Andriopoulos, "and the feedback was very positive." The party was then invited into the larger of the existing Salus homes — a 12-bed facility — to have supper with the clients and ask them questions.

To prepare for the public meeting, Salus invited a number of key people to address the community members, including: its

architect, to talk about the design of the home and his attempts to integrate it visually and aesthetically with the surrounding homes; a psychiatrist, a member of the board, to talk about mental illness and the type of client who would be found in the home; a neighbour whose property was adjacent to the existing 12-bed home; the executive director of the Canadian Mental Health Association, Ottawa-Carleton Branch, to talk about mental illness and the need for such a home; and a willing Salus resident, to explain what such a home would mean for other people with mental illness. A local resident well known for her community activities was asked to chair the meeting.

"We thought we were quite well prepared," said Andriopoulos. "But at that meeting on January 5, 1987, all hell broke loose. The OCCC and other neighbours arrived with picket signs and were threatening and abusive to the speakers. With the exception of the Salus resident, they did not allow anyone to complete their speech. Naturally, the media had been invited by the opposing group, and they filmed the events."

Although he tried publicly to declare his support for the project at the meeting, the alderperson was constantly interrupted and verbally abused by the crowd. It wasn't until the following day that he was able to pledge his support.

"The results of the meeting could probably have been predicted," Andriopoulos told the audience. Although Salus had quietly developed its first home in 1979 and its second in 1984, the social scene in Ottawa was very different at the end of 1986 and early 1987. "Many organizations who have previously attempted to establish group homes for the mentally ill, such as the Supportive Housing Coalition in Toronto, have advised against such large public meetings as they generally serve no purpose but to create fear, misunderstanding, and bad press," said Andriopoulos. "They have advised that a well-planned, door-to-door campaign with trained volunteers to elicit support and answer questions in an informal manner is more successful."

The concerns raised by the neighbours at that meeting, said Andriopoulos, were probably not new to anyone who has developed any type of group home. "There was clearly a misunderstanding of the mentally ill and the type of client we would be housing, as evidenced by community fear of potential client violence. They feared that their children might be molested. They feared that the crime rate in their neighbourhood would increase and that the property values would decrease. And they were very concerned about the number of clients we would be housing in the home — 20 seemed a very large number."

"They were also concerned about the process by which we went into the neighbourhood. In other words, they protested that we actually made a desposit on the property without consulting them first."

In terms of press coverage of the meeting, there were a lot of local TV news stories and interviews with the groups opposing the meeting and the proposal. "The group opposing the home was the one keyed in on by the press," said Andriopoulos, "and not the supporters who were quietly there but were afraid to talk out for fear, in some cases, of physical violence.

Typical headlines read: "Group Home Fight Heats Up," "Salus Won't Budge," "Group Home Wars," "Salus Stunt Will Be Remembered." This kind of sensationalized press coverage continued for the next several months. Letters to the editor, both pro and con, were published continually.

Along with one of the psychiatrists on Salus's board of directors, Andriopoulos held several television and radio

"Juvenile detention facilities were little more than jail cells and were certainly not meeting the criteria for rehabilitation that was contemplated by the Young Offenders Act."

"The Young Offenders Act contains some strict restrictions concerning information that gets out about who is in the home and who has access to it, and we felt the less known about the project the better. As it turned out, this tactic proved disastrous for us."

interviews. "We always attempted to explain why it was so urgent that we establish a home of this size. We expressed our understanding, as best we could, of the community's fears and explained our responses to those fears. We also attempted to explain how much we wanted to sit down with community members in a calm manner and welcomed invitations to attend other private meetings of various community groups to encourage more dialogue."

"Unfortunately, our point of view wasn't always portrayed as we would have liked in the press, but that is not a new experience for any of us." However, there was a backlash to the public meeting that Salus had not anticipated. It came from the organization's own residents.

At the time of the disastrous public meeting, Salus had more than 50 residents living in its existing homes. The residents were extremely upset by what was happening. "Until then they had lived quietly at Salus," related Andriopoulos. "That was one of the reasons they chose to live with us. There was no publicity associated with our homes. The addresses were never publicized. The fact that our residents were living in a group home or halfway house was in no way identified by the person answering the phone, and so many people were living in our homes without their employers or other people in their surrounding environments knowing about it."

But, suddenly, Salus clients and the homes in which they were living were in the limelight. "They were fearful of addresses being publicized and pleaded with us not to allow anyone else into their homes. No members of the public. No politicians. No photographers. No reporters." Reluctantly, the board of directors agreed. Although it would risk Salus's newest project, the board maintained that the interests of its established clients had to come first.

However, even this backfired, said Andriopoulos. "Before we knew it, we had a lot of community pressure, especially from the alderperson, to view our existing homes, take public tours through the homes, and show people what they were like and what was going on in them."

Initially, the board of directors would not agree to hold public meetings or open houses after the January meeting. They continued to meet privately with other community groups: for example, the Homeowners Association of Carlington, which generally supported the idea of the home but opposed the number of residents to be housed in an area zoned for single-family dwellings (albeit on a busy regional road at the periphery of the R-3 zone).

A great deal of correspondence flowed between Salus and the OCCC, but initially the ad hoc group resisted any meetings. The OCCC continued to voice its opposition to the press on a regular basis. Salus dealt with reporters from the local community newspaper and sent letters to the editor, giving reasons for the number of residents suggested in the proposal and explaining the impact the public meeting had on its residents and why it was refusing an open house.

In mid-February, Salus finally managed to arrange a meeting with the OCCC. Although the meeting was less volatile than the public meeting, the group continued to insist that the home would be too large. "They would accept only six psychiatrically disabled residents in their community," said Andriopoulos. "They wanted guarantees that no resident would commit suicide.

They accused us of having a slick public relations campaign and of having been ill-intentioned when we put the deposit on

the property. They continued to call the proposed home "an institution full of schizophrenics. They weren't willing to listen to psychiatrists and other professionals who tried to explain what a rehabilitation program entailed and what life-skills training and other parts of the program we had set forth were all about."

The OCCC continued to write letters to the Ministry of Health; in response, ministry representatives attended another public meeting to speak on behalf and in support of Salus. The OCCC representatives who walked out of the meeting were very unhappy that neither the Ministry of Health nor the Ministry of Housing was willing to cancel the project.

As pressure on the alderperson increased, he began to press Salus to concede to an open house. He refused to accept the Salus rationale that the interests of their clients come first. Eventually, the organization agreed to hold open houses when the clients would not be in their homes: every Friday for one month between 12:00 noon and 2:00 p.m.

One person showed up to take the tour.

Salus did, however, hold other public meetings. Drop-ins at the local community centre provided the public an opportunity to study the architect's designs and share their views directly with him. "In fact," said Andriopoulos, "we incorporated a lot of the views of the neighbourhood into the design. The brick and white siding exterior was aesthetically designed to co-ordinate with the two neighbouring houses. A sunken terrace provides privacy in the back. A six-foot high fence was stipulated by the alderperson and welcomed by the abutting neighbours. And there were other design considerations, such as the deletion from the plan of proposed bay windows, which might have decreased privacy. We felt it was important for us to be as accommodating as possible regarding the wishes of the neighbours while keeping within our program requirements."

"The residents who opposed us told us they would never accept it until hell froze over."

While not giving a detailed account of the demolition application and design review process encountered by her group, Andriopoulos told the audience that when these approvals finally went to the planning committee, there was only one extra vote in Salus's favour that cast the final decision. Because the vote was so close, one alderperson had the issue re-examined by city council a few weeks later. But his attempt to squash the project failed, with final approval granted eight months after the process began.

Construction did not commence until September 1987, at which time Salus again circulated information to the neighbourhood about the demolition and building processes and encouraged community input and complaints. On several occasions, the group tried unsuccessfully to establish a neighbourhood task force for trouble-shooting and joint problem-solving.

Throughout the campaign process, the Canadian Mental Health Association of Ottawa-Carleton played a key role, lobbying politicians, sending letters to the media, issuing press releases, and getting the professionals in the mental health community active on Salus's behalf. "Without their help," said Andriopoulos, "we couldn't have done it."

The group home has been operating for a year and has a "kind of tentative peace agreement with the community." The Salus strategy is to play it safe, carefully screening its clients before they are accepted into the home, and to maintain a "low profile," creating few disruptions in the community and few contentious such issues as parking. "We don't have complaints about noise emanating from the house," said Andriopoulos, "because we are careful to keep radios and TVs low and quiet in the back

ground. We are trying to keep a neat appearance in terms of the yard and the abutting hedges so we do not stand out. In these small ways we can integrate into the community."

The residents of the group home welcome and encourage this low-profile approach, as they "suffer from extremely low self-esteem; have a fear of leaving the house; and are terrified of the neighbours and of the reactions they heard of and read about in the newspapers."

In conclusion, Andriopoulos told the audience that Salus continues to receive limited community support for its Fisher Avenue group home, a neighbourhood fundraiser for furnishings being the most concrete evidence of help offered in the last several months.

"After a year or two of managing these groups, quite often we have noted that the effort outweighs the benefits."

Moving from psychiatric patients to young offenders, William Grant, a partner in a New Brunswick law firm and president of the province's John Howard Society, related the tale of his group's similar, yet different uphill climb for community acceptance of a group home in the city of Saint John.

Grant's experience began in the spring of 1986 when the John Howard Society of New Brunswick received a request from the Department of Justice to establish and operate a home of unspecified size for young offenders in the Saint John area. "At that time," said Grant, who is also now chairman of the Provincial Planning Appeal Board for New Brunswick, "the Young Offenders Act had been in effect for two years, yet Saint John, with a population of 125,000, had no beds available to serve this group."

Instead, the province's young offenders were being held at one of two what had previously been called juvenile detention facilities. "They were little more than jails," said Grant, "and were certainly not meeting the criteria for rehabilitation that was contemplated by the Young Offenders Act."

Still, the John Howard Society had to take a long, hard look at the issue before making its decision, because, while the group was already operating a facility for adults, its greatest problems had revolved around the 16- and 17-year-olds using it. "In the two years since the Young Offenders Act had been implemented," said Grant, "the number of problems in our adult halfway house had dropped dramatically. As a result, we had to really think about whether we wanted to deal with the younger group again."

The society decided to accept the challenge and submitted a proposal eventually deemed acceptable by the Department of Health. As an aside, Grant told the audience that the society "could never really quite figure which department we were dealing with. We were asked by the Department of Justice to submit the proposal, but it was the Department of Health that got back to us."

A site selection committee was struck to locate a suitable location — and found one in the fall of 1986. The site, on the periphery of a residential area with a main artery on one side and an entrance to the residential area on the other, received board approval. "We felt this would be as unobjectionable a location as we could find," said Grant. "It also had a lot of other things going for it: a good size; close to bus routes and recreational activities; and within walking distance to schools. So, for the purpose of housing 16- and 17-year-olds, we thought we had found the ideal location."

Four months later, the society received the approval it had been waiting for. Fortunately, the house was still available, and the group submitted an offer to purchase. "We had in the meantime checked out the zoning requirements," said Grant. "At the time, I was a member of the city's planning advisory committee and was, therefore, aware that group homes were permitted in residential areas zoned for one- and two-family residential dwellings."

According to Grant, a group home, as defined by Saint John's by-laws, is "a building or portion thereof used to provide family-like care or rehabilitation for not more than six children up to the age of 18 or for not more than six mentally retarded or physically disabled individuals of any age who for various reasons cannot reside in their own home or with a family other than their own." In addition, a group home must be sponsored by a government agency or a registered charity and licensed for the purpose by a government agency; residents must be supervised; and staff must be professionally trained to handle the type of people residing in the home.

The society believed that it could easily comply with the city's group home by-laws and, after obtaining approval, went ahead and signed an agreement to buy the property. At the time, said Grant, there was some concern among the society's board of directors about public reaction. "Even though we did operate an adult facility, the board had experienced a complete turnover in the 10 or 12 years since its opening, and none of us had been through that previous experience. As a result, a lot of ambivalence existed about what had to be done in terms of contacting the neighbourhood."

"Some of us were concerned that we should do something; others felt that the privacy of the people to be housed was paramount. The Young Offenders Act contains some strict restrictions concerning information that gets out about who is in a home and who has access to it, and we felt the less known about the project the better. As it turned out, this tactic proved disastrous for us."

For the three weeks following the signing of the agreement to purchase, said Grant, everything went smoothly. In the meantime, the society contacted several local politicians, including the then MLA for the area, Peter Trites, who is now the province's Minister of Housing. "We informed them, but we did not really try to enlist their support. In anticipation of the possibility of a public reaction, we wanted them to know where to go and who to call for more information."

About three weeks after the agreement was signed, Grant received a call from a man whom he had never met before who identified himself as a resident of the area in which the site was located. The man asked a few questions about the proposal, and Grant outlined the group's plans. When the man found out that an agreement to purchase had already been signed, he said to Grant, "So it is a fait accompli; there is nothing we can do about it." To this Grant said he replied, "Well, I guess, no, as far as we are concerned there is not anything you can do about it. But you are entitled to any information that you would like, and we certainly do not want to be bad neighbours. However, we did feel that we had the right to move into the neighbourhood like anybody else."

That evening, concerned residents held a community meeting. As MLA for the area, Trites was asked to attend and approached Grant for some information on the project. "The next day," said Grant, "the group began a neighbourhood campaign, distributing

"Although housing special client groups has more to do with the sociology of housing, these groups represent a major challenge for all of us."

misinformation about the proposal to the neighbours. And when I say neighbours, I mean half the city. They extended their efforts to a wide area that included people who could not give two hoots. Because, as far as the NIMBY syndrome goes, backyard is really what it is all about. If it is not in their backyard, nobody cares; nobody gives a darn, as we found out."

In any case, the community group spread its misinformation far and wide, contacting the local newspaper. In its own defence, the society felt it had better get out some accurate information. Although it had planned to hold a public meeting later in the process, the society decided to push the event forward, organizing an emergency meeting on 48 hours' notice.

Even though the media was not contacted, the event was well advertised in the newspaper. This, in combination with a door-to-door information campaign organized by the society, resulted in a good turnout.

At the public meeting, many strong and angry opinions were expressed. As was the case in the Salus experience, those who tried to speak out in favour of the society proposal were shouted down and treated rudely. "Those in opposition basically had the floor," said Grant. But the one exception to this rule has continued to baffle Grant. "After giving an impassioned explanation of why group homes for young offenders are necessary and detailing the programs that would be provided for them, our executive director got a standing ovation from the same crowd that was ready to tear my head off."

"The tail was definitely wagging the dog. We couldn't decide whether to go on the attack or just hope that it would go away."

The public meeting could hardly be termed a success. In fact, the Department of Health had advised against holding it. "As the department had been through a number of these things before, it considered public meetings to be of little or no value. But given the media reaction that we were experiencing at the time, we didn't feel we had much choice," said Grant.

We held a private meeting about a week later: gave them a lot of information and made it very clear that we planned to proceed with the group home. One thing we did that probably most groups do, and I think is very important, is we didn't try to paint a rosy picture about what was going into their neighbourhood. "I have heard stories from other people who have been opposed to these group homes over the years and who have claimed to have been told that you're just going to get kids who have been involved in a fight in the schoolyard, or something like that in these homes. That is just not what happens. You don't get incarcerated by the youth court unless you have been there a few times — unless you've got real problems. And so we did make it very clear to these people that this was the clientele we were going to be dealing with," said Grant. "I think in the long run this approach paid off for us."

After the public and private meetings and after they found out they were not making the headway they wanted, the members went back to the newspaper and, through the local common council, arranged for a public meeting. "Strangely enough, we were never informed of it. We found out about it the following day when the headlines hit the newspaper. And all the while we were getting a little concerned because the name of John Howard was really being dragged through the mud in the local paper," said Grant.

By this time, the organizing committee felt that events had totally gotten out of its control. "The tail was definitely wagging the dog," said Grant. "We couldn't decide whether to go on the attack or just hope that it would go away. We hoped it would go away, but after the session with the common councillors and

after some of the comments made by the councillors, we felt that there was no way we could just sit back and let it ride. So we decided we would go and talk to the councillors ourselves. They were very accommodating in terms of getting us in to see them on short notice. They wanted to see us in a private session, however, and we agreed to do that, but we also asked them if they would allow us to speak to them in a public session. We had heard enough about our group supposedly sneaking in the back door, about the underhanded approach that we had taken. You know, we were convinced that we were doing right. And we were not getting this kind of reception in the public at all or from the politicians."

The meeting with the councillors proved extremely productive and was probably the turning point as far as the Jocelyn Road experience went because, said Grant, they no doubt realized what they were up against at that point. "We brought with us a family court judge who would be sentencing many of these young people and who was aware of the crying need in the community for this facility. We brought with us correctional services staff who would be working with these people; they all impressed on the councillors just what the need was. The interesting thing about the family court judge, too, was that he had formerly been the Member of Parliament for the area for about 25 years. He laid it on the line to them, politician to politician."

After the meeting with council, a few other minor skirmishes occurred in the press. However, to this point in time, events were out of control for only about six weeks. "The residents who opposed us told us they would never accept it until hell froze over," and some of them still have not accepted it. We managed to go into business two or three months after all this started, and they opposed us in the courts about two months after we had opened for business.

The court application was somewhat interesting, said Grant, in that the opponents tried to argue that we were operating what is defined as a "group care facility" in the zoning by-law. A group care facility is defined as "a building or portion thereof designed or used for persons harboured or detained to receive medical, charitable, or other care or treatment and includes a dormitory or residence for a school, hospital, or convent but does not include a group home or daycare centre."

Grant added, "Now, I am not sure why somebody receiving medical or charitable care is harboured or detained, but that is the definition. The opponents' argument was that the harbouring or detaining aspect of our operation was what brought it within the definition of a group care facility. Also, the group home definition speaks of 'family-like care,' and we were operating on the shift model rather than the family model, so that we didn't have house parents there, we had people working shifts. So they said, they're not operating a family-like situation, they are operating, well, they liked to call it a jail."

The judge actually had to think about it for 24 hours or so before he dismissed their application, but they certainly had us concerned. Their lawyer did an excellent job in the court hearing. "But when all was said and done and everything was sifted through," said Grant, "all that could be said was that it was a group home as contemplated by the by-law."

Since June 1987 when the court hearing was completed, there has been little reaction from the residents. The common council set up a committee to look at the by-law and study the whole business of group homes, with the main recommendation that

some kind of a consultation process should be initiated. Before a building permit is issued for a group home, the sponsoring agency must do the following: hold a public meeting in or near the subject neighbourhood, at least 15 working days before applying for a building permit; advertise the public meeting at least 10 working days before the meeting by individual letters sent to homeowners within 100 metres of the group home, and by public notice at least twice in the newspaper not less than five days before the public meeting; appoint a neighbourhood resident to the board of directors if requested by the neighbourhood; and document and distribute to the neighbourhood either within the letter to the neighbourhood or at the public meeting the following details — number of potential residents, reason for residency, number of staff members and qualifications, rules and regulations of the home, and the type of programs to be offered to the residents.

"The next time, two years later, we got a chance to get into this field, quite frankly, I was quite reluctant to take it on again," admitted Grant. "I felt a little shell-shocked after the first one because, as I was the president, I was the one quoted and called on regularly by the media. I didn't think we had the stomach to go through it again. But we did. As it turns out, we were lucky to get a second chance because we were able to demonstrate we had learned from our mistakes."

The second time around, our executive director had put together what he called "a group home acquisition strategy," which called for consultation, public meetings, that type of thing. We signed an agreement, following which we arranged a meeting with the Minister of Housing, Peter Trites, and asked him to review our acquisition strategy with us. He did — in great detail — making some suggestions that actually cut down the public consultation process that we had planned. He was a little more familiar with the neighbourhood. Said Grant, "Again, we were moving into Trites's riding. But he was very good about it. We went through the public meeting again, and we wrote to all of the councillors. We conducted a door-to-door campaign in the neighbourhood, distributing pamphlets and questionaires."

"It is difficult to say that we did things right or that we were lucky the second time," conceded Grant. "One of the officials with whom we deal in the Department of Health wrote a paper on it. His conclusion was that there are so many variables involved in the neighbourhood entry process that probably the most dominant one is luck."

"I felt a lot more comfortable being in control of the situation though. I'd rather not just depend on luck."

As the department head of Support for Community Organizations, Department of Health and Social Services in Quebec, René Rouleau provided his own thoughts and experiences about integrating projects into neighbourhoods. In particular, Rouleau's involvement with an innovative, active, interministerial partnership experience concerning the homeless gave another perspective to the issue for the symposium delegates.

In his opening remarks, Rouleau said, "I could talk about the 27 projects that were supported in Quebec during the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, but I decided instead to speak to you from the inside, as a manager of a ministry that grants funds to different advocacy groups. I would like to tell you about the obstacles that we meet as managers of public

funds and the difficulties we experience in helping these groups implement their projects. Specifically, during the past two years, my department has had a very constructive and positive experience with the Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ)."

In Quebec, said Rouleau, the relationship between the SHQ and the Ministry of Health and Social Services that developed during the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless proved to be an interesting, co-operative effort. This collaboration seemed doubly pleasurable for Rouleau's department, which manages more than 2,000 applications for financial assistance from various community and volunteer organizations with clienteles as diverse as alcoholics, substance abusers, women who are victims of violence, senior citizens, the handicapped, the mentally ill, youth who are experiencing problems. "When SHQ representatives approached us for help in choosing projects for the homeless, our first reaction was to ask what help could we provide in this area. We were also wondering whether they considered social housing as an end or as a means [to the problem of homelessness]," said Rouleau. "We were very pleased to discover that their objectives were similar to ours. We were also wondering whether the clients were consulted in the development of social housing programs, and we wondered who developed these programs and based on what needs."

To ensure efficient co-operation between the SHQ and our ministry, the department had to do several things administratively:

- redefine our respective objectives;
- identify our respective programs;
- clearly establish the differences in the basic philosophy of each participant (social workers, architects and housing program designers have different approaches); and
- establish a basic vocabulary, a sort of common language.

The results were multi-dimensional, said Rouleau. Twenty-seven housing projects were first implemented during the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. This involved mainly the creation of new housing units but also the improvement of existing ones.

Then, new funds were invested in the community to help the homeless: $400,000 in 1987, $850,000 in 1988, and close to $1 million this year. "In all, more than $2 million over three years has gone in to support the homeless and community groups," Rouleau said.

The clienteles were diverse, with battered women, youth experiencing problems, the homeless, alcoholics, substance abusers, AIDS sufferers, and people suffering from mental illness all benefiting from this co-operative venture.

"We were able to experiment with new forms of housing, such as shelters, supervised apartments, and emergency homes," added Rouleau. New funding frameworks were also developed: For example, a home for battered women in Quebec can get as much as $200,000 in funding for its annual operations. Finally, an interesting approach was to leave in the hands of the local level the task of setting up the groups. "We also appreciated the significant work done by technical resource groups to ensure a solid framework for the projects."

"Without any hesitation," said Rouleau, "in this case, the benefits outweighed the efforts. However, to keep these projects alive, there is the need for community groups to build a solid experience." According to Rouleau, this is because, unfortunately, adverse effects of such projects can arise.

Question and Answer Period

Q: There was mention of key supporters, either identified by the politician or from other sources in the community, who would support a group home philosophically or for whatever reason. Was it located anywhere in the experience of putting these together where those people were useful in the strategies that developed in confronting the opposition? The residents who lived in the buildings that were successful ended up becoming involved in the process. The board of directors had to make decisions in terms of access to show that success as a strategy for dealing with the opposition. Is there anything those organizations picked up from that?

Grant: As far as any involvement of our clientele — young offenders — that is strictly prohibited by the act. We could not, even if we wanted to, conduct tours of the home once it was opened. We had tours once our renovations were completed, and allowed the residents and the neighbours to go through to see what was there, but the confidentiality of the identity of the young offenders is very strictly laid down in the Young Offenders Act. So it really wasn't possible for us to involve them in any way in that sense.

As far as the key residents, they weren't necessarily going to be key residents in support or in opposition to the proposal. Trites felt they were the vocal people in the neighbourhood, and they should be "diffused," if you will. Whether they are for or against you, call them, let them know, and at least then they can't stand up at a public meeting and accuse you of doing this behind their backs. He identified them as the people most

likely to be vocal about it. So that was the purpose of contacting these individuals personally as opposed to just dropping something at the door.

Q: You mentioned the involvement of the Ministry of Health and Social Services in the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. Does the ministry have any other projects not intended for special clienteles in terms of support: for example, a boarding house that would allocate some units to former psychiatric patients, maybe shared apartments with some form of support. Has the ministry set funds aside for this type of support? And are these funds used to pay salaries or to support the operating expenses of groups already formed?

Rouleau: To answer your second question, the programs are aimed mainly at providing support to the community organizations in their democratic operations, but also to pay for the salaries of the staff required for operating the new homes. These are mainly homes for women who are victims of violence and for young people who are homeless. Grants varied between $125,000 and $200,000 to help keep the home open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with two or three co-ordinators and a team of volunteers to provide services. Without volunteer involvement, the operation of this type of shelter would easily require a budget of $350,000 or $400,000. Therefore, these funds are granted to help those groups.

In Quebec, we work at the community level, where these projects must be initiated within the community. They are not government-initiated projects.

We allow the sponsor groups to provide some

Such adverse effects include:

1) It is possible that, because of the quality of new housing, the clientele for whom it was intended would not use the facility. For example, Radio-Canada aired a documentary this winter on Dernier Recours Montréal, a last-resort shelter for the most needy in our society. If too many renovations were made to this facility, the basic clientele would shun the place because this shelter is unconditional, and social workers would ask that housing programs be developed more carefully.

2) Many resources are difficult to locate because nobody wants them in their "backyard." This is creating some reaction in certain neighbourhoods. In Quebec, an organization for AIDS sufferers called MIELS-Québec had to wait six months to get a permit to operate in the city. Commented Rouleau: "The funny thing, is, this building is now located in a very affluent neighbourhood. While we tried to establish this home in a popular neighbourhood, we were never able to educate the population to get them to agree to the project. So, paradoxically, it might be better to approach the more affluent neighbourhoods to find a better level of tolerance."

3) There is also the difficulty of placing new resources with older, less structured resources. Local resources should be reinforced whenever possible.

4) The implementation of these new projects often exceeds the financial capacity of the ministries involved. In Quebec, said Rouleau, "to get the $1.5 million necessary, we had to take funds away from other community programs on the waiting list."

5) Some organizations do not have the means to ensure efficient project management. Not all community groups have the management experience required for major projects. So when half a million dollars is granted to a community organization used to managing $25,000 or $30,000, it is necessary to provide them with the training required to manage this new equipment. Too often, social housing program designers do not have the time to provide this support or did not anticipate this effect.

6) Some of the smaller community groups, because of the elaborate infrastructure they inherit, lose their basic community character. They become more like organizations that are part of the social services network.

7) Finally, said Rouleau, there is always the risk of "ghettoizing," where social housing is concentrated only in large cities. In Montreal, for example, some neighbourhoods are predestined for social housing (which Rouleau believes have reached the break-even point).

In mentioning such adverse effects, Rouleau wished to point out to the delegates that, "after a year or two of managing these groups, quite often we have noted that the effort outweighs the benefits."

Consequently, he advised the delegates, "As designers of new social housing programs, you should ensure the recurrence of operating budgets for your resources and enlist the co-operation of local partners during the very first phases of program development. It is much easier to co-operate before than after."

As his concluding remarks, Rouleau asked delegates to relect seriously on the future needs of social housing. Having first commented that new contemporary phenomena exceed our capacity to support the projects, Rouleau pondered on the form of housing that would be required to house AIDS sufferers, or to house violent men (instead of taking the mother and children away from the home and placing them in special homes, should we not take the man away and place him in a special home). Rouleau added: "Did you know that for women who are victims of violence we are no longer at the traditional refuge? We are now at the second stage, the supervised apartment — a place where these women, after the 60 to 90 days spent to weather down the crisis, need an apartment to get settled back into normal life. At what cost, and who will pay the bill for these new needs?"

Senior citizens no longer want group homes but supervised apartments with basic medical services — a place where they will be able to meet other people from the same socio-economic background and with the same needs. Immigrants are also changing the face of Montreal and Toronto, where already, the second generation, and even the first generation, of children of immigrants are experiencing social housing problems, said Rouleau.

With respect to ex-prisoners, he asked how can we develop a new housing project that would not look like a relative security home or a sort of "community" prison.

"Although these issues have more to do with the sociology of housing, they represent a major challenge for all of us," he said.

Access to housing for the homeless requires special conditions. Before offering the homeless shelter, we must identify their actual needs. We must try to understand, said Rouleau, the situation that led them to become temporarily or permanently homeless. "Once this first diagnostic is made, maybe together we can find a customized answer."

"Therefore, we need to talk as often as possible."

training and make some improvements, but everything that concerns housing — the physical structure of the buildings — is left to the Société d'habitation du Québec.

To answer the first question, the Ministry of Health and Social Services leaves the door open for other categories or problems. For example, social service centres, in co-operation with urban planning departments in some cities, have tried to develop innovative forms of social housing. I think of the problems in foster families for youth experiencing adaptation problems. I think also of prevention measures required for mental health patients due to the deinstitutionalization policy. We need to find new forms of housing for these people instead of placing them in institutions that are very costly and do not promote social rehabilitation.

But this strategy for other housing clienteles will be based mainly on the new orientations established by the Ministry of Health and Social Services, which call for the regionalization of budgets and strategies. Therefore, the establishment of administrative regions with regional councils will make it easier to develop strategies that better meet the needs of the citizens.

DEVELOPING YIMBY "YES IN MY BACKYARD" ATTITUDES

DÉVELOPPER DES ATTITUDES «OUI, DANS MA COUR»

Pearl Grundland (Chair)
Senior Planner
Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs

Deirdre Gibson
Development Consultant, Gibson & Associates
Ontario

Yvon Vézina
President and Chair
Standing Committee on Housing
City of Québec

Helen Sause
President
National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials
Washington, D.C.

Strategies for overcoming obstacles to building social housing include: the process of establishing community acceptance; approaches to conflict resolution; developing a more positive and less adversarial planning process; and the potential roles of different stakeholders. These and other strategies are explored in depth by the speakers.

Il existe divers moyens de surmonter les obstacles qui se posent à la construction de logements sociaux. On peut notamment chercher à obtenir l'approbation de la collectivité, trouver des moyens de résoudre les conflits, élaborer un processus de planification plus positif et moins conflictuel et déterminer le rôle éventuel des intéressés et intéressées. Ces stratégies et d'autres sont examinées en profondeur par les conférenciers et conférencières.

"The one key element that has affected the success or failure of any innovative, affordable housing idea has been the degree of acceptance of that idea in a community," commented Pearl Grundland, senior planner with the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and chair of the session, *Developing YIMBY Attitudes*. "Shouts of, 'No, not in my backyard!' have been enough to sound the death nell for a great number of important initiatives that would have served the housing needs of many people in many communities."

"We have heard this from the minister and saw examples this morning at the mock municipal council debate of what happens when NIMBYs stand up and make their views known. NIMBYs have caused decision-makers to change their minds against, or away from, supporting affordable housing initiatives. They have caused housing producers to pick up their bags and go

elsewhere. And they have somehow given the existing residents in a community the confidence to think that they have the right to decide who lives in their neighbourhoods."

However, said Grundland, "Thankfully, a lot of people and a lot of groups have not taken this lying down. They have stood courageously against negative NIMBY attitudes. That is really what we are here to talk about today: changing negative attitudes; turning them into something positive; getting people to say YIMBY instead."

"Through the experiences of the speakers at this session today, we will hear about the strategies that have been used to overcome attitudinal obstacles put in the way of housing initiatives by local opposition. We will hear about the myths and preconceptions that have created these attitudes, and we will hear how these myths have been addressed to promote community acceptance."

"Trust your instincts," was the message Deirdre Gibson, a development consultant in Ontario who has been involved in social housing for almost 10 years, had for the audience. Having worked with more than 40 groups — from seniors' to families to those with special needs — in a wide range of settings, from rural seniors' projects to large developments in downtown Toronto, Gibson has experienced sweet success, bitter failure, "and everything between."

The Metropolitan Toronto YWCA, for example, has just completed the consultation process for a shelter for battered women in a major metro Toronto neighbourhood. "We got through the 35-day waiting period without one objection. But I have been at the other end of the spectrum where a community meeting involves so many angry and wild people that I am physically afraid."

Gibson advised the audience that a clear definition of why and what one is doing is essential for eliminating confusion and engendering community acceptance. As well, the site selection process should be weighed carefully. "It is never adequate to say, 'It was the first affordable site we could find.' And although as a development consultant that is often my personal reaction — 'Oh good, one I can afford!' — you cannot say such things in public. You have to be able to stress the positive aspects of the site."

Gibson suggested stating and restating the obvious, whether the search be for a stable community or a neighbourhood undergoing change. Often, the successful way to combat neighbourhood resistance is to repeat a positive statement in defense of a negative comment.

By having one planning principle solidly behind it, a group will best be able to proceed with the site selection process. "I have yet to find a social housing site that is perfectly flat, perfectly affordable, and perfectly zoned," said Gibson. "What I find is that if you can use an 'I know we need re-zoning but ...' approach; if you have at least one principle, one positive thing that you can come back with, it is very helpful."

Talking to neighbourhood planners early in the game can often be a key to the project's success, said Gibson, as planners can often suggest either sites they would like to see cleaned up or a corner that could be the first phase of a planned but nebulous redevelopment strategy that the neighbourhood itself is not yet aware.

"Shouts of 'No, not in my backyard!' have been enough to sound the death knell for many sound housing initiatives."

"It is important that you think out your potential roles as the non-profit housing provider. Do not just think of yourself as a delivery agency. Establish a long-term relationship with the neighbourhood."

Another important element, said Gibson, is a real knowledge of who is to be housed. "Often, private non-profits have directors that are 'community involved,' very idealistic. But that is not the same as being down in the trenches with the people who are being housed."

Gibson recalled the experience of a Toronto branch of the YWCA in establishing a shelter in East York. After the Y had done its first round of community door-knocking (something Gibson highly recommends — approaching the community before the re-zoning application goes out; introducing oneself and saying, 'Yes, we will be going through the municipal planning process, but we thought it would be good if you heard it from us first') — someone photocopied a newspaper article about a shelter elsewhere in Toronto that had had its door axed down by an irate husband. That same person then distributed it to the same neighbourhood where the door-to-door introduction campaign had been conducted.

Fortunately, said Gibson, the Y staff were able to turn the situation around. They approached the director of the shelter where this incident had occurred; when the day came for their public planning hearing, the director was there to tell council that the door had been axed down 12 years before and that the shelter had helped thousands of women since that time. "The director was able to show that this was one, isolated incident. He also pointed out that since this incident the building code had changed, with revised fire regulations requiring that all new hostels have steel doors." In addition, the Y had a woman present at the meeting who could speak through personal experience about who would be housed at the shelter, as well as the kinds of things that would occur there. "By having key people present at the meeting," said Gibson, "the Y was able to diffuse the situation successfully."

At that same meeting, a city councillor accused the group of having missed at least one identified person in its door-to-door campaign. Again, the Y staff were well prepared. They were able to refer to their campaign sheets, said Gibson, and say, 'We have actually been to that house twice. We were there Saturday morning at 10:00 a.m. We left a flyer. Here is a sample of that flyer. We went back Tuesday night in an attempt to be there when the occupant was not at work." In this way, the group effectively diffused the common cry, "You didn't consult us!"

Gibson went on to say that "the initial outreach undertaken by a group is critical. If possible, it is ideal to have people involved that live in the targeted neighbourhood. This makes an initial calculation of support an important procedure."

With her own clients, Gibson often undertakes a community profile of all the churches, Members of Parliament, and members of council to determine which organizations and what politicians will support a particular project.

Churches are often a great resource, Gibson told the audience, as are local social planning councils. In her door-to-door information campaigns, people are often paired off — a neigbourhood resident with a member of the supportive housing or non-profit group.

Having a former resident of a successful project speak at a public meeting about his or her positive experience can be an effective way of gathering support for a project. "It is difficult, however," said Gibson, "to ask someone to come and tell their story to an audience who you know is going to be hostile. You have to give that person a lot of support. I have successfully used role-playing with the person ahead of time, telling them to look at a spot in the back, telling them not to listen, reinforcing

the fact that they are helping us." On the other hand, said Gibson, this type of address can have an opposite effect and actually quiet people down "because, after all, people hate to speak out publicly against public housing."

Gibson advised the audience against letting the municipal planner spearhead a group's public relations campaign. "You should be going to your local planner and saying, 'We will be doing a canvass on such-and-such a day. We would like it to happen a week before the public notices go out. If you would like to participate, you are welcome.' But you must take control and steer the process. Make sure you understand from the planner ahead of time what is going to happen at the municipal council meeting. At some council meetings I have attended, the pros are on the right and the antis on the left, and there is a sort of no man's land between. Who gets to speak first? Or will it be the kind of thing where people just rise spontaneously in the audience? The more help you ask of your local planner, the more prepared you will be when you make your presentation before a neighbourhood and before people who might be hostile toward you."

Community canvasses, said Gibson, are an important part of working outside the municipal planning process and taking control. She emphasized, however, that groups undertaking such a canvass should train their volunteers. "Volunteers should be given a few standard, consistent phrases that they can repeat on your behalf. For example: 'This will be a non-profit housing project. We will house some people who are on government assistance, but we will have a full range of incomes represented, and the range of incomes will reflect the types of people who are already here in the community.' If a neighbour starts asking complicated questions, the volunteer should simply say, 'I will have the executive director (or whatever) get back to you because I really do not know the answer to that.'"

"It is difficult to train people not to talk," said Gibson. "I think when people ask a question, a volunteer's reaction is to want to fill in the gaps. They want to answer the question. So you have to train people not to. You have to train them to say, 'Gee, I'm sorry, I don't know.'"

Gibson also believes a developed public relations strategy that is controlled by the enabling group is crucial to a project's success. To control inaccurate information generated on behalf of a group by the press, Gibson suggested that one person be appointed to speak to the press. This will alleviate the possibility of differing interpretations of events.

"It is important to consider the issue of potential roles," said Gibson, "particularly for the private or municipal non-profits that tend to restrict board membership to politicians. Would you accept a neighbourhood member on your board?" Gibson told the audience not to feel badly if they felt uncomfortable with the idea, as boards have access to confidential information that might not be appropriate for neighbours to record. She suggested, instead, that groups consider a neighbourhood committee and what such a committee might and might not do according to the board's mandate.

Gibson cautioned against the inclusion of neighbourhood committees in the tenant selection process, however. Rather than allowing these committees to select tenants, Gibson advised that they instead have input into how the tenants will be selected. "Often," she said, "it is enough reasssurance for them to know that you plan to run credit checks or that you intend to link people to services already established in the community, or to be

"One sure way of creating a favourable attitude toward residential projects for low-income people is to submit small-scale projects involving different clienteles."

"The most successful projects have involved local public officials and residents in the decision-making process at the earliest possible stage."

informed of maintenance procedures — that you will keep the fence painted and the lawn mowed. These committees want to make sure a project is not going to look like poor people's housing. As long as your board can live with it, this is a legitimate role for a neighbourhood committee."

Another idea, said Gibson, is for groups to respond positively toward the community by joining, for example, a neighbourhood ratepayers' association. "Assure them that you share a concern for many of the issues they are concerned about. Suggest that a neighbourhood park be improved, a daycare expanded, or an after-school program initiated."

"It is important that you think out your potential roles as the non-profit housing provider. Do not just think of yourself as a delivery agency. Establish a long-term relationship with the neighbourhood."

Conflict resolution is another important aspect of community acceptance. Although the first rule of business is talk, talk, and more talk, said Gibson, it is important to be tough and consistent. "Decide in advance what you are prepared to concede and what you are not prepared to concede because there will be basic parameters. Maybe you could allow for extra parking; maybe you could build a higher fence. But what you are not willing to do is give up your right to be there. Consistently come back with positive points — 'Yes, we will consider that, but we are looking for a way to make sure we are under construction by year-end' — because people who do not want you in their community will be very persistent. You just have to keep saying to them, 'Yes, we do want to be here.'"

Another point to remember, Gibson told the audience, is that the opposition has to be allowed to fight things out among itself sometimes so it has a chance to resolve its own problems. In many situations, a good deal of the conflict will occur between disparate members of the community. Although there may seem to be conflicting dynamics, remember who the different players are and pull back. "In one project," recalled Gibson, "there was a lady in the community, the Tree Lady, who wanted us to locate our project in such a way that we would not have to cut down any trees. The rest of the neighbours, on the other hand, wanted us to locate as far away from them as possible, which was right where the majority of the trees were growing. So we let the Tree Lady have a go at the neighbourhood community. They had to resolve that between themselves."

Dramatization is another effective model for gaining community acceptance. "Role-playing is a very good way to let people vent their fears and talk about what they would like to see changed without making them feel they are attacking you," said Gibson. "I actually worked with a group of deaf and blind people in a fearful community that seemed to believe the handicapped were contagious. They felt their children would somehow be tainted if they were exposed to people who could not hear or see. To overcome this fear, the group had representatives go to neighbourhood public schools and teach the children sign language. The children went home with a very positive message, and this rippled back through the parents."

Role-playing can be effective for high school children as well, said Gibson, especially concerning the issue of homelessness. As at the IYSH conference, individuals can be given a flour sack that is supposed to be a baby and pretend to be homeless persons.

Another form of dramatization that can be quite successful, said Gibson, is the use of video. The Region of Peel's Canadian branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association has produced

a video, called "In My Backyard", in which a neighbour adjacent to a project describes how he felt when the project was initiated and how he feels now. The video, which can be purchased from the association, incorporates before-and-after footage of the actual house.

Government agencies are another conflict resolution resource available to groups in their struggle for neighbourhood acceptance. "Many of us view government simply as a program provider, but government representatives can sometimes be resources for us. They can come to a meeting and speak dispassionately about a particular project. Such objective input can be extremely important, as it is often difficult to keep one's emotions under control when under attack for something about which we believe strongly.

Use of the courts for conflict resolution should be a last resort, Gibson told the audience, "but once your opposition has hired a lawyer, you might as well let them go ahead quickly and have their day in court."

Throughout all of the stress and the neighbourhood conflict, Gibson advised housing providers, "Keep your eye on your final goal. Because what I have seen happen time and time again is that, one year after a project has been in operation, you will find that neighbourhood attitudes really have changed. With a lot of hard work on your part, fear of the unknown can be overcome. It is a difficult process to convince people that you should be in their backyards but, like lots of other things in life, it is a struggle well worth undertaking."

"It is difficult to convince people that you should be in their backyards, but it is a struggle well worth undertaking."

Because it is characterized by a homogeneous population and a strong social integration, Quebec City is prone less to segregation and more to solidarity between its social classes than larger cities, which are more ethnically diversified. This characteristic, explained Yvon Vézina, the president and chair of the city's standing committee on housing, has served as a basis for promoting measures that help to gain acceptance for social housing.

In fact, Quebec City has been addressing the acceptability issue through various measures and initiatives since the early 1960s when a task force was established to examine acceptable conditions in the residential stock. At the beginning of the 1970s, the city's first social housing units were constructed and the first residential renovation and neighbourhood improvement programs were implemented.

In 1979, Quebec City developed its own housing policy and established the Standing Committee on Housing to control the application of such a policy, which was first reiterated in the city's master plan and then updated following a wide public consultation process. Said Vézina, "This policy is based on the will of municipal councillors to ensure diversity in terms of income, household, and age."

In addition, Quebec City went ahead and established its own programs, including one aimed at making municipal land available for housing. This program, said Vézina, resulted in the production of housing through upgrading, including 12 schools, which in most cases were handed over to co-operatives. To supplement the grants provided through residential renovation programs, the city also initiated its own grant programs for both apartments and rooms. And, finally, the city was also involved in downtown revitalization programs that are closely linked to the development of residential neighbourhoods.

"Direct exchanges [between urban planners and local politicians] is the best way of solving conflicts concerning the implementation of housing projects."

"Thanks to the housing policy and the measures we have taken, Quebec City has a large quantity of adequate and affordable housing units," Vézina surmised.

Having provided an overall background on the city's approach to housing, Vézina went on to discuss two specific instruments used for problem-solving: the Standing Committee on Housing and the zoning advisory committees.

Comprised of five alderpersons and four public servants, the Standing Committee on Housing was created in 1979. The committee's mandate, said Vézina, is to provide a follow-up on housing decisions, to ensure the pursuit of housing objectives, and to promote their implementation. By being closely involved in the planning process through this committee, elected officials are able to direct municipal actions based on their concerns and knowledge of the environment. "In addition," he said, "through direct exchanges with urban planners, alderpersons can better explain to their constituents the orientations resulting from the decisions taken. We believe that this mechanism provides the best way of solving conflicts concerning the planning and implementation of housing projects."

The zoning advisory committees, on the other hand, is comprised of local representatives, who review applications for zoning changes. These committees are forums where different points of view can be debated and a consensus can be reached.

"But one sure way of creating a favourable attitude toward residential projects for low-income clienteles is to submit small-scale projects involving different clienteles," said Vézina, who ruefully admitted that nowadays "it is easier to implement large-scale projects than several small-scale ones."

Vézina also mentioned other ways of creating favourable attitudes: to encourage local organizations to implement projects as this is effective in generating positive attitudes toward social housing in the community; to use residential renovation programs that improve the urban fabric and contribute to the upgrading of residential housing; and to limit social housing to specific clienteles and promote rent supplement or housing allocations for the largest number of people who need help in finding adequate housing.

The city's role in all this, said Vézina, is to use its authority to promote the implementation of projects for low-income clienteles. And it did so by not only creating property programs and a municipal housing office, but also by creating the Champlain Municipal Housing Corporation and promoting the expansion of the rent supplement system. Concerning this lattter initiative, Vézina said that Quebec City "is well aware that the housing problem originates from an income problem. It is calling on governments to create a housing allocation program that would provide a direct &rentalé supplement to tenants... . Of all the possible forms of assistance, we believe that this one is the most likely to help dissipate preconceptions toward low-income families."

"The city can also serve as an intermediary between public agencies and community organizations to facilitate project development and implementation. Finally, the city can use its moral authority to convince the community of the appropriateness and the validity of decisions to implement social projects."

Although social housing projects, for the most part, are received favourably by city residents, Vézina conceded that some resistance to special client groups has been expressed by the resident population. "Although there is no generalized rejection, there is still some reluctance to accept clienteles that include families, especially single-parent families," he said.

These feelings of reluctance certainly abound toward the homeless and people suffering from various serious illnesses, such as AIDS. In the case of the homeless, Vézina told the delegates that the city had established an ad hoc committee, which submitted a report that ultimately led to the creation of a program encouraging the renovation of boarding houses. Another proposal is on the table to create a committee comprising influential community members involved in the deinstitutionalization process, with such a committee mandated to recommend how to reduce the concentration of these particular people, who need medical care and regular checkups. [Current favour is for homes to be constructed on the outskirts of residential areas and near public service zones.]

"As it is neither possible nor desirable to implement projects without first informing the population [in the neighbourhood], consultation is extremely important. But because it can often be a source of tension and uneasiness, a form of consultation that offers the possibility of measuring the pulse of the population on ongoing projects without providing citizens with a 'right of veto' is favoured," said Vézina. After all, he concluded, "the most fundamental right of all citizens — to have access to adequate housing — is not expendable."

In her presentation, Helen Sause, president of NAHRO and project director for the San Franscisco Redevelopment Agency's 1.5 billion dollar Bueno centre mixed-use development project, discussed the "scattered-site approach" to social housing, which, in the United States, is a result of the federal government's efforts to end discrimination in housing.

The NIMBY aspect of YIMBY, said Sause, is a growing problem in the United States and one that virtually all American communities are currently facing. Funds for housing have declined dramatically over the last 10 years and, almost concurrently, the pressure against placing social housing in communities has grown. "As a result, NAHRO and the professionals in housing community development have been trying desperately to increase neighbourhood acceptance of scattered-site housing," she said.

"I think we all have learned that the gathering of huge numbers of low-income people in high-rise developments simply did not work as a social experiment. Our task as housing professionals is to change the perception of public housing and to recreate its image in the form of housing that fits in with its neighbourhood, with a few units here and a few units there."

In 1967, said Sause, a report was undertaken in response to widespread racial tension and violence in many American cities. This report found that housing programs need to be directed toward changing patterns of segregation and eliminating ghettoes. The following year, a second report concluded that new subsidized low-income housing should not be concentrated in the slums but scattered in various areas throughout metropolitan communities.

The findings of these two independent studies led in 1968 to the passage of the Fair Housing Act, which extended non-discrimination coverage to privately- as well as publicly-owned housing stock. The result was a mass migration of minorities to suburban areas. These people were members of more stable households and more upwardly mobile families, and what they left behind were concentrated numbers of people with various social problems and a new social problem for subsidized housing in the vacated communities.

"As housing professionals, we must change the perception of public housing."

Housing professionals across the country reeled in shock as attempts to disperse these low-income housing units within middle-income neighbourhoods met with massive resistance, said Sause. "Local, urban, and suburban neighbourhoods organized to fight the wholesale dumping of undesirables into their neighbourhoods, an infusion that they believed would lead to lower property values."

Part of the resistance was a result of the typical human knee-jerk opposition to change. But the rest was the result of poor planning and poor communication on the part of housing officials and local decision-makers. "Our efforts to bring about public acceptance of the much-needed scattered-site housing concept was handled very poorly."

"We have begun to address that problem," said Sause, "and, using the techniques that have been described here, are beginning to overcome some of that resistance. But we are now faced with and are battling a new adverse situation. The recent publicity and resultant perception of drug problems in public and assisted housing has further increased resistance to scattered-site housing."

The scale, type, and design of a plan, in addition to how well it is perceived as fitting into the proposed setting, is one primary factor NAHRO has identified as affecting the acceptance of a proposed development. "Neighbours always want to know if a development is going to be an eyesore," said Sause. "The recurring concern that a development will have a negative impact on property values is an indication that people believe social housing development will have an undesirable effect on their communities."

Other common fears that must be addressed, said Sause, focus on the perception of legions of unruly kids defacing property and neighbourhoods overrun with undesirables.

Opposition to the dispersal of low-income housing, said Sause, originates in neighbourhoods and communities that want to preserve the character and integrity of their living conditions against what they perceive as an invasion of minority groups and people on the lower end of the socio-economic scale. "To a large extent, this comes about because many middle-class communities are made up of former inner-city dwellers who fled their old residential areas to escape problems of increasing crime, the erosion of economic status, and the demise of their neighbourhoods. The last thing they want to see is the fabric of their new community threatening to unravel at the hands of misguided do-gooders involved on upgrading low-income living conditions."

The success of scattered-site housing development depends on a number of variables that will change from community to community, said Sause. These variables include housing market conditions, local politics, local ethnic opposition, the extent of integration before the proposed development, and land availability. "Although there is no sure-fire method of overcoming neighbourhood resistance," she said, "the most successful projects have involved local public officials and residents in the decision-making process at the earliest possible stage. You may never gain their acceptance and you may never gain 100 per cent of the votes, but you will at least have heard their views and respected the fact that they need to express those views."

Emphasized Sause: "There is nothing more disastrous than showing up with a complete proposal and telling a neighbourhood what is about to be done. That is certain death for a project."

As well, the development of impact statements that review the processes of the placement of scattered-site housing is essential, said Sause. It is also important to ensure that program goals are not overly ambitious. "Community meetings and public involvement will not overcome resistance. The projects that have the highest rate of success are those that incorporate sensitive planning and realistic goals that least disturb the environment.

The NAHRO experience has been that single-family, duplex, tri-plex, or small multi-unit structures are the least threatening models of scattered- site development. In addition, new construction efforts are generally less well accepted than those involving the renovation of units that have either been vacant or are in a state of deterioration. "New construction is the most difficult to sell as it is often seen to represent a significant change and pose a threat of increased density, particularly when there is a prospect of units housing large numbers of young children."

A mixed-income tenant base is also important, said Sause. "We need a whole ladder of housing in our communities, and if you can mix the incomes of those who are to be housed and avoid projects that are 100 per cent subsidized, it helps to avoid the 'low-income development' designation."

"Because of the shortage of available funds, local governments are obsessed with targeting housing dollars. The idea of once again concentrating low-income housing in one area is an unhealthy one from the social aspect of a neighbourhood. The theory of getting more bang for the public buck is shortsighted, and decision-makers must be convinced that incomes should be integrated."

Ultimately, however, the success of scattered-site programs will depend on overall project management. "With community groups serving as watchdogs in an atmosphere of skepticism and opposition," said Sause, "management becomes a critical component, not only of the success of a particular project but also of our ability to develop future ones. It should, therefore, be a developer's objective to ensure that the management of a project is carried out well and that the project appears to be and remains a part of the developed community."

Sause described the infamous Yonkers, New York, experience as the ultimate example of the NIMBY attitude. Yonkers' city officials and uninformed citizens coalesced to stonewall progress and the placement of affordable housing despite a court ruling demanding the end of the city's segregated housing system. Contempt of court fees reached one million dollars a day before the coalition capitulated and developed a plan to desegregate housing. "This kind of adamant resistance to the desegregation of housing occurred because some residents felt their property values and neighbourhoods would deteriorate if such housing proposals were put in place. This is the ultimate example of what we do not want to happen in our communities."

In 1988, the California Department of Housing and Community Development debunked the myth that placement of social housing units deteriorates property values. It published a report on assisted housing and local property values, called *The Effects of Subsidized and Affordable Housing on Property Values: A Survey of Research*, which examined and summarized 15 in-depth studies covering a wide variety of federal housing programs. Of the 15 studies reviewed, said Sause, 14 reached the same conclusion: No significant negative impacts arise from locating subsidized, special-purpose, or manufactured housing near market-rate developments. Some of the studies even reported positive effects on property values.

Question and Answer Period

Q: I am actually going to suggest a sixth 'P', which I think covers an element of Helen Sause's presentation and is very important. This 'P' I call product, or the form of housing. The approach to which you are developing your design and your location and so forth has to be carefully thought out if it is to come as close as possible to an acceptable product, one that you can sell to the neighbourhood as something it wants in its backyard.

Grundland: I agree with you. You are quite right. My theory is not adjusted.

Q: I would like your comments on a strategy I heard some cities use in order to bypass or avoid NIMBY reactions, which is to first design the worst possible scenario or project and then come back with a project that is not nearly as bad. I don't know if you have heard of such strategies, but what are your opinions?

Grundland: I read a children's book once called *It Could Always Be Worse*. The story is, you have this family with eight children. Every day the father tries to figure out how to deal with all this noise and activity in the house so he comes up with this brilliant idea. He goes out and buys this sheep and puts the sheep in the house. Of course, the sheep makes a terrible mess in the house. And then the wife says, "What are you doing? Why are you doing this?" And he says, "Never mind, trust me." And then he goes out and brings in a cow, and he puts the cow in the house. He does this for a few days, bringing in new animals every day. And then, finally, when everything is just completely crazy, he gets rid of all the animals; suddenly, the house seems so peaceful

with the eight children. Maybe that is what you are talking about. Start off with something horrible and then when you take it away, it seems nice. I am not sure if I would recommend this as an approach, but maybe my panelists have some other ideas on that.

Sause: You stand a good chance of losing the opportunity to do anything if you take that approach, and I would assure you that it is too much of a gamble. A professional really wanting to place housing would be mistaken to undertake it.

Gibson: I have actually heard of a council where between the five members they made a deal. The deal was that the councillor for whichever ward the project was slated to be in would always be allowed to vote against it, with the understanding that the other four would vote for it. So sometimes we have to be very, very pragmatic. But I do agree with Helen that there is a risk that the baby might get thrown out with the bathwater. We have all these wonderful domestic analogies here; however, I think if you are going into a neighbourhood to establish a bond of trust, starting off with a sneaky approach might not be the best idea.

However, I would like to mention that I think the process we have been talking about here is one where the non-profit is starting and they are going to be organizing everything. In Ontario, some of the non-profits have been very successful with an alternate technique called a proposal call. Is this familiar to anyone here? You advertise that you are looking for a piece of land on which to achieve your objective. And you get apples and oranges and bananas; you get all of the developers submitting to you and then you have to decide which best meets what you want. So it means

By acknowledging the belief that sensitive planning and realistic goals which least disturb the environment have the highest rate of success, Maryland's Housing Opportunities Commission in Montgomery County has developed several projects that use good design to combat resistance to public housing.

Sause described Timberlawn, one of the commission's projects. An 83-unit complex, 30 of the development's units will be made available to low-income families; 20 per cent will be allocated to moderate-income families; and the remaining 50 per cent will be rented at the prevailing market rate.

"What is interesting about Timberlawn," Sause told the audience, "is that it is adjacent to a development called 'The Gables'. In this upper-income development surrounded by attractive wooded areas and characterized by cedar siding and split-level units with balconies, condominiums sell from $125,000 to $160,000. To preserve the integrity of the community, the commission used the same architect that designed The Gables to design Timberlawn, a well-received tactic as the existing community was assured that the design created would be in keeping with the surrounding area."

While one cannot always use the same architect, said Sause, it helps to have quality in your design and architecture.

Sause then made reference to Omaha, Newbraska, which has a population of roughly 350,000 people. A conservative community with final neighbourhoods, its housing authority has assumed the responsibility for scattered-site development. "The reputation of the housing authority in that city is excellent," said Sause, "and it has worked hard to make it that way. Whatever your housing entity is, it needs to have the respect of the community."

In Omaha, the housing authority's reputation is based on its efforts to make residents upwardly mobile and present them with job and educational opportunities, as well as its maintenance and managment of a public housing stock that is, in some cases, 40 and 50 years old.

About five years ago, said Sause, Omaha's housing authority undertook the task of placing scattered housing throughout the city. It currently has 250 units in place and a further 175 units on the books. The successful placement of these units has been achieved through a platform of community-wide support. "The authority's commissioners act as ambassadors, and staff members do careful spade work," she said. "They speak at service clubs and to educational and business groups to help them achieve their objectives. They go out into neighbourhoods slated to receive units and begin discussing the project at the time the site selection process begins. They hold public meetings in those neighbourhoods. They hold educational meetings with city council so that council thoroughly understands the objectives and the pros and cons of the project."

Although the formula for this initial groundwork will differ from community to community, Sause believes the basis for this type of unit placement program and the successful sale of scattered-site development to any neighbourhood is an awareness that communication at all levels is paramount.

"The record really shows that scattered-site developments can blend with affordable housing," Sause told the audience. "Although it takes a while for that notion to prevail, examples that debunk the myths and the NIMBY syndrome are beginning to spring up in towns and cities across our country."

"What we need to do now," Sause said, is publicize those examples, work with the media, help those in influential

positions in our communities understand that these housing developments can be successfully placed. Omaha has done this, and the housing authority there proudly displays a city map that illuminates the city's various housing developments, including scattered-site projects, at the touch of a button. In effect, the whole city is dotted with lights."

"This is the objective we must all share."

In pulling together the session, the chair, Pearl Grundland, summarized that to succeed in the development of new public attitudes that are supportive of affordable housing initiatives, it is extremely important to use broad-based action involving everyone in the development process.

Grundland offered the audience a comprehensive approach for responding to NIMBY and developing YIMBY attitudes, which she called 'The Five Ps'. In this model, the first 'P' stands for perception; the second for political commitment; the third for policy; the fourth for process; and the fifth for program.

"By the first 'P'," said Grundland, "I mean the attitudes we have all faced that are based on the perception that affordable or special housing necessarily means slums, ghettoes, or high-rise jungles. We must develop new attitudes based on a new reality that we are talking about a different kind of housing. Not slums, ghettoes, and high-rise jungles, but housing that is for our friends, our parents, our families — for people who will live and work in our communities and for people who will take pride in their homes."

"These are the kind of facts that as producers, planners, politicians, and developers we have to begin reinforcing in order to change perceptions. Only through a change in perception will we be successful in bringing about a change in attitude."

"Political commitment is also important," added Grundland, "because, for the most part, decisions relating to housing and housing development are made in the political realm. They are made by politicians. Without the stated overt commitment of politicians, we may not succeed in changing attitudes. We need strong politicians who are willing to stand up and say, 'Yes, in our backyard.' There are a lot of politicians who have the backbone and are clearly articulating this political commitment, so it is not an impossible task."

"The third 'P' is policy," said Grundland, "and policy is an absolutely critical 'next step' in achieving YIMBY as it provides a basis on which to enter into discussions with people who express concerns about affordable or special housing."

Process, the fourth 'P', refers to the public involvement process: the process that gave rise to NIMBY and the process through which YIMBY can be achieved. Elements included in the public involvement process include education, the establishment of a coalition of support, and mediation.

Program, the last of Grundland's 'Ps', is the process of "putting one's money where one's mouth is. To ensure that all the policies and processes are implemented, you need good, solid programs," she said.

that sometimes you lose some elements of control in getting the design the way you want. But it also means that you don't have to go through that public process. So I think there is maybe some merit in that process.

Q: I have a comment to which the panelists might care to respond if they have used this technique before. I believe the panelist representing Peel was going to mention a technique that they have used successfully there, that is, taking objectors, putting them on a bus, and giving them a tour of successful projects. Have the panelists ever heard of this tactic before?

Gibson: We are not really here to advertise the Region of Peel, but I have sent people from other areas to Peel. Often when a group is starting out and they don't have a track record, it is very important that it show concrete examples of projects to the people, especially given that few people can actually read drawings.

Sause: I would just like to suggest that the more publicity you can get while conducting those tours the better. I don't know how your papers work here, but getting our editorial boards and our reporters from the local news stations out to look at these really helps. They may not write because positive news doesn't make news. It is the negative. But it does help to neutralize some of the comments about housing if they can really understand what good developments are and how they work. And I advise you to encourage the objectors and reporters to talk with the people who actually live in the projects because they need to understand that the people who live in assisted housing are people who are striving to have a life — just like the rest of us.

Gibson: It occurred to me that perhaps as professionals we need to go out and bug other professionals. One of the things that I thought is that we should be taking that mock council debate to the planners because often our local planners and their perceptions of the neighbourhood are sometimes our biggest hurdle. Also, in Ontario, the provincial architectural association actually had a contest to design a doghouse. But wouldn't it be interesting if we could have our design professionals participated in a design competition for social housing instead of dog housing!

Vézina: Just to add to the discussion: There has to be consultation and co-operation among all the professionals involved and with the resident population. Success depends on it. But we have to be careful because people are really aware; as soon as we disturb them a little, they react very quickly.

INCLUSIONARY MECHANISMS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

MÉCANISMES RÉGLEMENTAIRES POUR ENCOURAGER LA CONSTRUCTION DE LOGEMENTS ABORDABLES

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Bernard Tetreault
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Anne Borooah
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Ontario Ministry of Housing

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Ontario Ministry of Housing

In this session, speakers discuss alternative mechanisms for including affordable housing in plans for demolition, commercial and industrial growth, residential intensification, and new suburban housing development.

Des conférenciers et conférencières examinent divers mécanismes qui permettent d'encourager la construction de logements abordables dans les projets de démolition, d'expansion commerciale et industrielle, d'intensification résidentielle et de nouveaux lotissements en banlieue.

In the 15 years since Montgomery County, Maryland, first introduced an inclusionary zoning ordinance, Bernard Tetreault, as executive director of the Housing Opportunities Commission, has overseen the production of 8,000 low- and moderate-income units as part of the county's regular development. (The commission has received numerous national awards for its innovative housing efforts.)

"We have used 8,000 moderately priced units in a variety of ways from meeting public housing needs and serving those with the very lowest incomes, to assisting families in rental and ownership opportunities ... ."

"We have used those 8,000 moderately priced units in a variety of ways," said Tetreault, "from meeting public housing needs and serving those with the very lowest incomes, to assisting families in rental and ownership opportunities all the way up the scale to just below market value."

Incorporating urban, suburban, and rural communities, Montgomery County is the northwest suburb of Washington, D.C. According to Tetreault, its rapid growth makes it condusive to an inclusionary zoning ordinance.

Basically, Montgomery County law states that every new subdivision of 50 or more units has to provide a specified number of "moderately priced dwelling units" (MPDUs). In exchange for an increased density bonus of 22 per cent, a builder must ensure that 15 percent of the units produced are MPDUs. (A provision exists that allows for a land transfer on which 15 per cent of the units could be built.) This works out to be the equivalent of a three-building lot bonus. The "moderate price" is set so that the builder does not lose money and, because of the increased density gift, the land used is essentially "free." According to Tetreault, a moderately priced unit can be built for $65,000 or $70,000.

A sales price requirement is attached to each MPDU, ensuring that the purchaser does not receive a windfall during the home's first 10 years. After this period, there is a proportion recapture between the homeowner and the county government. "If a house is sold for substantially more than the purchase price, then," said Tetreault, "the windfall is divided between the county and the homeowner."

The Housing Opportunities Commission, which is the public housing authority, receives 40 per cent of these MPDUs and uses them to overlay other subsidies in an effort to serve low-income families. The commission keeps 33 per cent of its 40 per cent share and spins off 6.6 per cent to qualified non-profits. Forty per cent of the moderately priced units are retained in ownership to serve low- and moderate-income people for the forseeable future. The remaining 60 per cent of the MPDUs are sold to eligible-income families under the controlled resale conditions.

In a legal context, said Tetreault, some concern was expressed when the legislation was introduced about taking without giving. By giving increased density and taking moderately priced dwelling units, however, *quid pro quo* is achieved. Moreover, after 15 years, there is no longer any concern that the zoning ordinance be legally challenged.

In Montgomery County, MPDUs come in a surprising variety of shapes and sizes. As long as building codes are met, a builder can produce the MPDU allotment in an inexpensive cluster within an exclusive single-family home development. Although the MPDU cluster might look like a single-family unit, it could actually be a quadraplex, with four separate entranceways. In terms of dispersal, a builder may decide to put all the MPDUs together at the end of a cul-de-sac, making the neighbourhood fairly dense at that point.

In Ptomic, an exclusive subdivision in Montgomery County and the site of the commission's most recent MPDU acquisition, homes are selling on the open market for $500,000. The commission received its townhouse MPDUs for $70,000. Although the MPDUs are very attractive, they do not look exactly the same as the market-priced units.

In another exclusive Montgomery County community, the top two floors of the moderately priced townhouses comprise one unit, and a flat is provided below. In this model, the builder

was able to intensify his use of the land and, therefore, produce units between at $65,000 and $70,000.

Other examples include two-storey townhouses with a garage beneath, back-to-back townhouses on a slab, and garden apartments. Although it is not always the case, in some developments, MPDUs are identical in appearance to market-rate units.

In one market-rate development, the commission bought 17 units under the MPDU program. The developer across the street did not build his MPDUs, instead transferring the land back to Tetreault's agency. "We hired the same architect and produced 85 townhouses under the land transfer option. Fifty per cent of the units are market-rate, renting at approximately $1,000 a month; 20 per cent are renting at $350 a month; and 30 per cent of the units are rented to very low-income earners at $250 a month. The community is working out beautifully and is 100 per cent rented," said Tetreault.

Tetreault believes inclusionary zoning ordinances are most effective in areas experiencing new growth, since they allow agencies to obtain units as the community is building outward. In addition, although it is possible to pass such ordinances in a weak housing market, Tetreault suggested that a strong housing market is the best environment for this type of legislation. "In a healthy housing market where there is a real need for low- and moderate-income units, politicians are more likely to take the heat that arises when an ordinance like this is passed."

It took Montgomery County five years to see its inclusionary zoning ordinance through to legislation. "Advocates were pushed and badgered," said Tetreault, "but a lot of thought had gone into the planning process. A group of housing activists had lawyers study the legal aspects of such an ordinance and how it might be challenged."

Once they are in place, however, many benefits can be accrued to inclusionary zoning ordinances. They produce units as land is being developed, resulting in a range of housing options, and they involve the private sector in the production of the units. "We do not have to go and beat the neighbourhood over the head every time we want to produce an assisted unit," said Tetreault. "The private developers are producing them for us and are compelled, by law, to offer them to us."

"In addition," concluded Tetreault, "inclusionary zoning ordinances result in the dispersal of assisted units, which is healthy both in an economical and racial sense. They result in the creation of stronger communities."

"Inclusionary zoning ordinances result in the dispersal of assisted units, which is healthy both in an economical and racial sense. They result in the creation of stronger communities."

Anne Borooah, manager of land use and intensification with the Housing Conservation Unit, Ministry of Housing, was a key architect, or engineer, of Ontario's housing and land use policy. Focusing her presentation on that policy statement, Borooah first explained to the audience how such a mechanism is used to achieve government objectives.

Under the Planning Act of Ontario, municipalities adopting local land use documents must have regard for the principles embodied by policy statements. As a result, these statements only affect land use matters, or matters regulated under the Planning Act. "The policy statement on housing and land use cannot, therefore, control program issues associated with the delivery of non-profit housing, the price of housing, the incomes of individuals living in the units created as a result of the statement tenure, or service creation," said Borooah. "In fact, it

"Municipalities must take a broader look at the range and needs of households not only within their communities but also within the housing region at large in order to provide for household growth and a range of appropriate housing types."

cannot do a lot of the things people expect it to do. It is just one piece of the puzzle. It is one of the things we are undertaking in Ontario that will contribute to providing more affordable housing and housing that better meets the needs of Ontario households."

"As a policy statement, it will alter a system over time. When official plans and zoning by-laws are updated, normally within a period of one to five years from the final issuance of a policy statement, it will affect the review and the content of those official plans and zoning by-laws and to some degree development plans as they come forward."

Although, in the past, policy statements have only been addressed when a municipality has chosen to undertake a review of its documents or when an individual application has been affected by the process, the Ministry of Housing has established a degree of priority on this particular draft. "We have asked those southern Ontario municipalities near the greater Toronto area, the region of Ottawa-Carleton, and the cities of London and Windsor to update their documents more quickly than they might normally do upon the issuance of such a policy statement, which indicates the importance government has placed on implementing this policy statement."

According to Borooah, the policy statement covers five major areas: the supply of land for housing; streamlining the approval process; the variety and mix of housing types or the range of housing types in each Ontario community; the provision that at least 25 per cent of housing in Ontario communities be affordable housing; and the intensification of municipally defined areas, areas that municipalities have selected for various forms of residential development. Only three of these five areas, said Borooah, are inclusionary techniques bearing some relationship to what has been described in the American situation as incusionary zoning or inclusionary housing policy: the variety and mix or the range of housing types; the 25 per cent affordable housing criterion; and municipal intensification.

Borooah noted that, although the draft policy statement refers to the variety and mix of housing types, the final version of the statement will most likely use the "range of housing types" terminology in keeping with a recent Planning Act amendment that uses the same phrase in its establishment of housing as a matter of provincial interest. With respect to the range of housing types, the policy applies to all residential development occurring within a community, new construction, and intensification alike.

"We are asking municipalities to take a broad look at the range and needs of households not only within their communities but also within the housing region at large in order to provide for, through their planning documents, household growth and a range of appropriate housing types." If, for example, said Borooah, 60 per cent of the households in a particular region are single-person households, municipalities will, through their planning documents, ensure that the majority of homes built or intensified are not intended for large families. In this way, they will not fall into the trap of planning for housing of a size, type, and range that is inappropriate for the needs of the people to be housed.

"We are also asking them to establish the role that assisted and market housing will play in fulfilling the housing needs of households within the region. Essentially, then, we are asking municipalities to take a step back before actually establishing land use regulations to determine what they should be planning for in the first place."

Within the range of planned housing types, said Borooah, municipalities are asked that a minimum of 25 per cent be

affordable to households as defined in the policy statement. The ministry would like this affordable 25 per cent distributed throughout the municipality, a point that has been particularly controversial with the development industry. Unlike the Montgomery County example, Ontario's draft policy does not specify that developers contribute a percentage of each new development toward the provision of affordable housing. "Instead," said Borooah, "it asks municipalities to plan for appropriate locations throughout their jurisdictions to ensure the creation of affordable housing actually occurs. Thus, once municipalities determine what it is they need to plan for, it is incumbent on them to establish appropriate zoning standards and a development approval process that ensures the plan can be achieved. It is not enough to simply establish a broad provision that encourages a range of housing types; municipalities must also ensure they have the processes in place to implement this provision as applications come forward."

According to Borooah, the policy statement indicates that housing should be "affordable" to both low- and moderate-income households. Although this has generated some debate (in many communities it is members of the low-income sector who are in greatest need), the inclusion of moderate-income households in the policy is indicative of the ministry's concern with the ever-increasing proportion of households who are finding homeownership inaccessible and are subsequently being forced to remain in the rental housing market.

Once municipalities determine the "affordable" price range for households in the 30th and 60th percentiles, they are then asked to identify the forms of housing that are most likely to meet that definition, based on incomes for the market region, which are provided by the ministry. Target prices for the region are established at the minimum housing market level in the census metropolitan area, or equivalent, so that the more wealthy municipalities of a region cannot simply provide for their own jurisdictional needs.

In the statement, municipalities have been asked to take housing production costs and market values into consideration in their determination of what form of housing is likely to meet that objective. To illustrate the process a municipality might go through to determine this, the ministry has recently completed a small study of two market areas in the province.

According to Borooah, the process is fairly simple. It involves establishing costs, especially the cost of production relative to market values. Although, for example, production costs in high demand areas might allow for the creation of housing within a certain price range, the actual market value will put this housing beyond the reach of many households. The ministry wants to ensure that this aspect of production be considered when municipalities determine the range of planned housing types.

In terms of residential intensification (making better use of available homes and resources, existing services, schools, etc., in order to accommodate more households), the policy states that all municipalities will be expected to designate lands and areas in which rooming, boarding and lodging houses, accessory apartments, conversions from non-residential uses, and various forms of infill and redevelopment will be permitted. This, said Borooah, is based on a fairly practical analysis of the physical potential of an area to accommodate more households (i.e., how many households it was designed to service, amenity spaces, the ability of the schools to accommodate more children), as well as the demand for these kinds of households. In program terms, this is

"We are using a tried and true method of local implementation to convey provincial land use objectives."

"Municipal measures are very valid, but they cannot replace government assistance programs for social housing."

determined through a demographic analysis of household occupancy in terms of, for example, how a dwelling is currently occupied and what kind of living arrangements are currently provided for relative to how it could be occupied and what living arrangements it could provide for, as well as the demand created by smaller households for intensified accommodation.

A direct and ground-breaking provision in this area is that municipalities are asked to establish "as of right" provisions in their zoning by-laws for rooming, boarding, and lodging houses and accessory apartments where this type of intensification is permitted by the official plan. This would obviate the necessity of obtaining a rezoning each time an applicant or homeowner wished to install an accessory apartment or provide for rooming, boarding, or lodging facilities in areas allowing for intensification. In addition, municipalities have been asked to provide for future alterations to new stock so that modern developments do not encounter the same restrictive provisions inhibiting intensification in older areas.

According to Borooah, inclusionary provisions are generally characterized by one of two things: the removal of provisions that tend to exclude certain forms of housing; or the creation of a quota or an inclusionary requirement that housing providers are expected to meet. In terms of Ontario's policy, inclusionary requirements include the removal of provisions that prevent the creation of accessory apartments and the provision for the creation of a proportion of affordable housing. "Both are often described within the inclusionary spectrum of options," said Borooah, "and we gave a great deal of consideration to how we would try to implement these objectives at the provincial level."

For some time, the ministry considered issuing an advisory guideline to municipalities that would propose inclusionary mechanisms and indicate how they could be accomplished. However, once the ministry worked out its policy objectives on a provincial basis, it seemed an advisory guideline was not the best tool for achieving those objectives province-wide.

"The Planning Act was crafted to allow the province to issue statements on all matters of interest. The draft statement on housing and land use is a directive piece of policy that requires reflection in local municipal documents," said Borooah. "It directs municipalities to implement its provisions." This is in keeping with the way that provincial land use objectives have been implemented in Ontario to date. "We are using a tried and true method of local implementation to convey provincial land use objectives."

Without the combined work of the Housing Advocacy Task Force and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, which is involved in implementing the statement both through direct action as well as through the normal provincial review process, however, said Borooah, "we wouldn't have much of a policy directive. The province must have a process for ensuring the implemenation of the policy statement."

The ministry could have considered a number of other elements in achieving its objectives: empowering municipalities, through some form of legislation, to directly implement the objectives expressed in the policy; giving municipalities the ability to implement or regulate the tenure or form of housing; or allowing municipalities to regulate development standards.

"You could go even further than that, however," said Borooah, "and use an existing piece of legislation (such as the Ontario Planning Act) or introduce a separate piece of legislation that would directly empower and perhaps require certain provincial expectations to be met."

Although the Ministry of Municipal Affairs made minor modifications to the Planning Act in 1989 to better achieve housing objectives, to incorporate a major, substantive piece of policy in the act would constitute radical departure from the way it is currently structured, said Borooah. "The Planning Act is a process document regulating how planning decisions are made rather than what those planning decisions will be. To use the act to directly implement policy objectives would mean a major change in Ontario and one that we did not want to make without first trying the conventional method — the policy statement mechanism."

Another option used in many other jurisdictions, and those in the United States in particular, Borooah told the audience, is the use of one or more separate pieces of housing legislation to achieve inclusionary objectives. "Montgomery County, for example," she said, "has the ability to legislate at the county level, and each development is, in that case, directly affected by the legislation. Legislative process is complex, however, and requires additional powers that we currently do not possess in Ontario."

After considering the complete spectrum of inclusionary mechanism options, the Ministry of Housing decided to proceed with its draft policy statement. Although this option has some disadvantages — it does not, on its own and without complementary programs, guarantee price, affordability, or household matching based on income or need — it has several advantages as well. It is consistent with current practice; it can be executed without legislative change; and it works within an existing market system. "It does not create a separate market of units that must, in terms of price and resale, be regulated through something other than the market," said Borooah in conclusion. "And that is the overall objective of the policy statement: We are trying to work within the existing market to achieve a better mix of housing types in Ontario."

As with the province of Ontario and Montgomery County, the City of Montreal also has embarked on several measures to preserve and create affordable housing, measures that are proposed in the city's own Housing Policy Statment. Two of these measures, in particular are most important in terms of creating affordable housing, said Fabien Cournoyer, superintendent of the housing and urban development department, in his introduction.

But before describing the measures in detail, Cournoyer first sketched briefly the profile of the population of Montreal and the characteristics of the residential stock. According to the 1986 census, he said, Montreal has a population of 1,015,420, which is now stabilizing after a 20-year decline. Thirty-six per cent of the households a majority in Montreal are composed of one person; 35 per cent are families with children, and of these, a third are single-parent families, 75 per cent of Montreal households live in rental housing, which is high compared to Toronto, where the proportion is 59 per cent, or to the rest of Quebec, excluding Montreal, which is 38 per cent. Estimates state there are close to 50,000 rental households under 65 who could access homeownership. In addition, said Gournoyer 39 per cent of the tenants use more than 30 per cent of their income for rent. This percentage is quite high, and it represents a significant increase from the 1981 census.

In terms of residential stock, Montreal has approximately 450,000 housing units. Of this number, said Cournoyer only

8 per cent are single-family houses. On the other hand, 50 percent of the units are located in "plexes," buildings of three stories or less that include from two to five units. As two thirds of these units were built before 1961 the housing stock is quite old, with 60,000 units requiring major repairs. This, said Cournoyer, represents 13 per cent of the housing stock.

Since the beginning of the 1980s, there have been approximately 6,000 housing starts a year. In addition, the city also has 14,000 low-rent units and approximately 9,000 non-profit units.

"These figures and statistics reinforce the need to take immediate action, because housing programs from superior levels of government are more restrictive or not well adapted, the city has proposed its own intervention measures."

With this statement, Cournoyer elaborated on the city's rental stock: "Traditionally, Montreal's housing stock has always been a vast reservoir of adequate and affordable housing in all areas. Still today, even in the downtown area, rents and the price of properties compare favourably with Canadian and American standards. In Montreal, the average price for a two-bedroom apartment is $450 per month. The preservation of this affordable housing stock is the best way to promote access to opportunities and thereby to the quality of life that Montreal offers."

In its efforts to continue offering a variety of adequate and affordable residential options to its current and future residents, said Cournoyer, the city doesn't want to forget its main objectives: to ensure that housing in Montreal remains adequate and affordable; to attract a more balanced profile of its population that would be more representative of the population of Quebec (Montreal has a high proportion of people living alone, senior citizens, low-income households, but few moderate-income families with children); to re-establish the urban fabric.

To achieve these objectives, the city has proposed a series of measures, which can be divided in two major categories: measures affecting the existing stock; and measures for the construction of new housing units.

The five measures affecting the existing housing stock are as follows:

- an acquisition program for the Montreal Housing and Development Corporation;
- an acquisition program for boarding houses;
- an acquisition and renovation program for co-operatives and non-profit organizations;
- a municipal grant program for renovations; and
- an assistance program to help tenants acquire their housing.

Having mentioned these programs, Cournoyer then went on focus on the acquisition program for the Montreal Housing and Development Corporation.

A paramunicipal non-profit corporation, the Montreal Housing and Development Corporation's mission is twofold:

- it promotes homeownership for a larger number of households by introducing affordable housing on the market; and

- it promotes the development of social housing to meet the needs of households who cannot access homeownership and for whom the effort would be too great.

Currently, the corporation owns and manages a portfolio of approximately 3,000 units, the majority of which are funded through the CMHC assistance program. It also has a cash flow of $10 million.

The corporation also has a mandate to develop major housing projects, said Cournoyer. Program objectives are:

- to increase the supply of affordable and adequate housing;
- to keep the citizens in their own environment;
- to encourage households to control their own housing conditions; and
- to create a municipal stock of low-rental housing.

The program will require financial participation from the city to allow the corporation to acquire approximately 1,000 units per year. The types of buildings that will be used are those with a wooden structure built after 1945 that require major repairs. These include approximately 40,000 units, which represent two-thirds of the units requiring major repairs. They are also located in neighbourhoods where the need for social and affordable housing is greater.

According to Cournoyer financial participation from the city will come in two ways.

First, there is the cost of the acquisition program, to which must be added the municipal grant for renovation. For housing co-operatives and non-profit organizations, the city adds to the grant provided by the Canada-Quebec Renovation Assistance Program (PARCQ), so that grants can reach 90 per cent of renovation costs. For the acquisition program, we estimate that the added municipal cost will range from $5,000 to $6,000 per housing unit.

However said Gournoyer, "these figures do not take into consideration the elimination of Rental RRAP by the federal government. Without Rental RRAP, the cost for the city could be higher, and we may have to reduce the number of units to be acquired. This will penalize low-income households searching for affordable housing."

Given this situation, emphasized Cournoyer, "Our own municipal involvement will result in the creation of an affordable municipal housing stock. In the short term, tenants will pay approximately the same price for higher quality housing because of the renovations made; in the long term, a gap will be created between the rent required by the corporation and the market rent, and this will benefit the tenants. It should be noted that this program provides opportunities in completely built-up areas where there are very few vacant lands for the creation of new affordable housing."

To construct new affordable housing units, the city is relying mainly on three programs: a homeownership program; Operation "Habiter Montreal"; and a development fund for affordable housing.

Cournoyer elaborated on these measures, particularly the first two. "For households who live in rental housing and who have

Question and Answer Period

Q: What has been municipal reaction to the Ontario goverment's housing policy statement so far?

Borooah: Municipal reactions have been mixed. We have had a very extensive consultative process as required by the Planning Act over the last eight months or so and have worked with major agencies representing all interest groups, including municipalities. We have also asked for individual responses from municipalities following a series of sessions held throughout the province to try to explain the content of the statement and its implications.

We have talked to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario who, initially, were not supportive of the overall intent of the statement. But we believe that we are going to be in a better position with them when the final version of the statement is released because a considerable amount of their opposition was based on the fact that it was a very urban policy drafted in such a way that it appeared to apply to rural areas. With respect to the municipalities, there were differences depending on what sort of municipality it was and to what extent they deal with these issues. There were overriding concerns, some of which we are trying to resolve in the final version; others are probably issues on which we will have to disagree.

In Ontario, we have a two-tier municipal structure, and the upper tier has tended to be more positive than the lower tier, the urban municipalities more positive than the rural. I can say that a majority of the responses from municipalities have at least agreed to the idea of the statement

and the necessity for it; now it is a matter of dealing with the content.

Q: The one issue I worry about is that inclusionary policies can become exclusionary. Along those lines, I am concerned about the affordable housing component. In some areas where we have been fighting for affordable housing, the definition of affordable housing means that for low-income groups, the majority cannot afford to live in the housing units that are built. So, on the one hand, you have neighbourhood reaction against affordable housing; on the other hand, you have a definition of affordable housing that doesn't really meet the concerns of the people who are lobbying for it and desperately need affordable housing.

The other issue I wanted to raise is the developing trend to a regulative neighbourhood mix. We have defined what is a healthy neighbourhood mix and what is a healthy component of affordable housing and of lower-income people. I sometimes worry when we start saying such things as, "Well, after all, it is only 25 percent of the housing that is going to be for these people who would be in the lower 40th percentile." This philosophy tends to propogate certain attitudes towards low-income people that can, in the long term, be quite negative. In a workshop this morning, we heard about measures by the Quebec Human Rights Commission to eliminate the requirement that income information be included in applications for housing. If we move in the direction of a regulated income mix, then are we not encouraging the use of applications and qualifications for housing based on income? Could this not be negative in the long term?

Borooah: It is true that the definition of affordable the financial means for homeownership, the city intends to provide the incentive that will facilitate their decision. This explains the creation of the homeownership program, which will consist of a decreasing property tax credit over a period of five years for a maximum assistance of $5,000. This tax credit will be applicable to new condominiums of less than $75,000 or new single-family houses of less than $95,000. With these ceilings, this program should result in the creation of units for households with an annual family income ranging between $35,000 and $40,000. According to Cournoyer, this program will be a key element of Operation "Habiter Montreal," a follow-up to Operation 20,000 Housing Units, now completed.

The program's objectives, said Cournoyer, will be to build affordable housing units, reach the target clientele, promote residential development and architectural quality, develop new products to meet the needs of the clientele, and attract a new clientele to Montreal.

"Our strategy is twofold: to provide homebuilders with municipal land in return for a commitment to build projects in accordance with the city's development program; and to rely on paramunicipal corporations, co-operatives, and non-profit organizations to upgrade some buildings as a way of meeting special needs in some areas and ensuring that the proportion of subsidized units allocated to Montreal has been reached."

With regard to its implementation, a reserve of municipal land will be developed as much of the available municipal land used for the Operation 20,000 Housing Units program. A development plan will be established for each lot and will include such elements as the target clientele, the architectural program, and specific requirements. Although these specific requirements will vary from one lot to another, they could include, for example, the integration of a cooperative project with a private project or the obligation to provide units that would be eligible for the city's homeownership program, or other requirements depending on the site or the neighbourhood.

This project will be open to housing co-operatives, non-profit organizations and the private sector. The terms of sale for land reserved for housing co-operatives will be based on a 52-year emphyteutic lease at 75 per cent of the market value, which means, said Cournoyer, that payment for the first year will be 75 per cent of the market value of the lot and $1 each year for the following years. "For example, if a lot is sold at $100,000, the payment for year one will be $75,000 and $1 for each of the 51 remaining years. The advantage for the city is that it gets the money for the sale the first year and regains possession of the land after 52 years."

For the private sector, the terms of sale will be similar to those used for the Operation 20,000 Housing Units program — the price will be in the lower margin of the market value. In some cases where special requirements are associated to the development plan, Cournoyer said that the price could be less and allocation will be based on a tendering system where consideration will be given to the architectural element, the clientele and meeting the program requirements.

Land allocation for co-operatives and non-profit organizations will be done via a tendering system directed at technical resource groups and housing cooperatives. The selection of the group will be based more on the benefits for the clientele than on the architectural quality of the product, which will be discussed later with the group selected to build the project.

Paramunicipal corporations will be encouraged to develop land that is more difficult to develop or that is more centrally located, possibly through joint ventures with the private sector. In Operation 20,000 Housing Units, we noticed that developers were reluctant to build in centrally located sectors. So the Montreal Housing and Development Corporation becomes a useful tool in this area.

"Our objective," said Cournoyer, "is to achieve approximately 2,000 units per year."

In conclusion, Cournoyer emphasized that because the City of Montreal was and is aware of the housing needs of its population, it developed concrete intervention measures aimed at providing affordable housing to its residents. Notably, to ensure the success of Operation "Habiter Montreal", the city is relying on the experience acquired from the Operation 20,000 Housing Units program. Therefore, said Cournoyer, "we are not creating a new, high-risk program but rather are working on a remake of a success story."

In addition, the acquisition program for the Montreal Housing and Development Corporation is another innovative measure. It represents a more direct intervention from the city that requires, however, a major financial participation. "The deterioration of the efforts required by many tenants during the past few years has led the city to take measures that will not necessarily improve the situation of tenants in the short term but will help create a municipal housing stock whose effects on rents will be felt in the longer term," said Cournoyer.

Having said this, however, Cournoyer by no means let the federal government off the hook. "The measures the city intends to implement to create affordable housing are very valid, but they cannot replace government assistance programs for social housing. Our measures remain limited, especially for the 39 per cent of households who live in rental housing and who use more than 30 per cent of their income for housing."

"Therefore," he said, "to provide an appropriate range of affordable housing to the different target clienteles, the city must continue to rely on other levels of government and on the private and non-profit sectors."

housing in the draft policy statement focuses on income as a benchmark. We thought long and hard about whether there were alternatives to that, especially since we were trying to implement this, not through a program but through the land use process. We were trying to come up with a physical form of housing that would indirectly be affordable. As a result, there is no income matching expected by the policy statement. Essentially, we are trying to get a better mix of housing constructed and to not specify who or what type of household is actually going to live in the dwelling. So it becomes a more comprehensive process on the part of the community to plan for the community at large better than they have been in the recent past. There has been an attempt not to introduce that unit-by-unit matching to a particular household.

With respect to the lower portions of the population, there has been some criticism that, if we define affordable housing according to certain benchmarks, such as half at the 30th and half of the affordable housing at the 60th percentile of incomes, the income mix will gravitate toward the top end in all cases. There is probably no perfect distribution that you can establish; in the end, I am not sure to what extent we will rely on benchmarks within the 60th percentile that are specifically related to income as opposed to relying on a process for municipalities to establish that distribution according to certain principles. We would like to have stayed away from income to create sort of a stigma or a label on the population that would occupy these units, but we felt there was no better way of establishing what is really affordable.

Q: In listening to M. Tetreault and M. Cournoyer, it occurred to me that, among others, one thing they had in common were measures to keep the housing stock affordable. The only comparable element of that in Ontario is probably the rental housing protection act. But in terms of the provincial housing policy — and I understand the comments that were made about trying to keep it within the planning stream and the tools that are available now — I wondered why the province did not consider the option of some measures to (as in the United States example) controlling somehow the resale values of houses once they are on the market as affordable housing. Second, where I think the Montreal lesson is important is the notion of the affordable rental housing stock and some of the measures that M. Cournoyer discussed in his position paper in terms of keeping that stock affordable and allowing the City of Montreal to acquire existing housing stock and manage it themselves — something not widely supported by the Province of Ontario through the non-profit program.

Borooah: The truth of the matter is that we did think about control and resale, and we are continuing to think about it in a variety of ways. The problems with control and resale are numerous and complex. We are looking at them, for example, in the context of government lands where we are the owners and, therefore, have a better ability to regulate such a thing. But if we think about housing starts every year in the neighbourhood of 80,000 and that one-quarter of those housing starts would amount to about 20,000 units per year, one has to introduce a very complex system of regulation so as to ensure resale prices are maintained over time and that there isn't a windfall for the first purchaser. This is what they are doing in Montgomery County: They regulate 300 units a year for a 10 year period. So you can imagine what the potential for creating a bureaucracy might be.

I think the starting point for this discussion, however, was a feeling that part of the problem was that the kind and forms of housing we were building were not matching the needs of the households, and that if we could do something to influence a more modest form of housing, particularly in the high growth and high demand areas, and thus get a better mix of housing types, we may not need that sort of control.

For the time being, for the market as a whole, we are hoping to see the market work better, providing we have a better mix of housing types.

Q: In your talk, M. Cournoyer, you did not discuss the dramatic change in your program, which includes a massive acquisition program. I know your housing is a little more affordable than in Toronto or Vancouver, which is where I am from. But we also have a provincial government that is not particularly interested in doing a great deal more in that area, preferring instead to partner with the private sector. And we are not sure that we are going to get very many results in the rental housing area. Certainly, we are not too sure what we will get in terms of affordable housing. My question to you, as a municipal level of government taking a very strong step in expanding your program, what is the anticipated cost of this program to you?

Cournoyer: Operation "Habiter Montreal" is not a very costly program because the city only has to make up 25 per cent of the cost of the land sold to co-operatives and non-profit organizations. For the private sector, the price will be in the lower margin of the market value.

The acquisition program for the Montreal Housing and Development Corporation will cost more, but we are examining different possible scenarios in terms of cost. The cost will be high, but it will result in the acquisition of 1,000 housing

units per year. Since this a priority for the city, it is a price we are prepared to pay. But it is much lower than if we were dealing with subsidized or social housing, where the cost would be $400 or $500 per unit. In this case, the cost will be much less because we are buying existing units and renovating them. Thus, we benefit from all the financial advantages linked to this type of development.

Q: It seems to me, coming from Toronto, that in many large urban centres, land cost is one of the biggest factors preventing the supply of affordable housing from increasing. One of the problems, even with something like the draft policy statement, is that where you allow for affordable housing to be built, it is still not economically feasible because the land costs too much. This is because on land zoned residential, the non-profit providers are competing against condominium and other providers who might get more money for the housing they build. Has anyone looked at zoning land by tenure, that is, zoning land for social housing or for rental housing as opposed to ownership, so that social and rental housing do not have to compete against high-cost ownership housing.

Borooah: We have done some work looking at the whole issue of tenure zoning. There are significant constitutional issues associated with zoning for certain forms of tenure, such as non-profit, where you would give an advantage to one group as opposed to another. This is one of the impediments to establishing that special kind of permission for zoning. The other provision is that this is not the nature of zoning: Zoning is land use and tenure is user-oriented as opposed to use-oriented. The extent to which we could adapt the land use process to meet something that it isn't intended to regulate in the first place is somewhat limited. It is the kind of thing I mentioned in terms of alternatives. But there are some difficulties, such as it being outside the framework of the history and the whole basis for land use regulation. To some extent, one does bump up against constitutional issues, unless one is prepared to justify that certain groups are disadvantaged.

Corke: Having said that, however, I think in some municipalities where there is a clear wish to make some kind of preference or some kind of opportunity available for social housing, mechanisms such as targeted land dedications are beginning to emerge. I know of a couple of municipalities where land dedication is occurring specifically for social housing, and, in some cases, in advance of the 25 per cent guideline to try to meet that. So, in terms of legislative change, it may be necessary to contemplate where you are mandating this kind of a thing. But some municipalities wishing to make provisions for these kinds of uses are fairly innovative in finding mechanisms to do it with. So it is not totally hopeless without a statutory change.

CHRA AWARDS BANQUET

CHRA Award for Achievement (Graham Emslie Memorial Award): Humphrey Carver, (left), Canada's housing "architect", receives the award from Martin Wexler, CHRA's Quebec representative and vice-chair of the 1989 symposium.

Prix d'honneur de l'ACHRU (Prix commémoratif Graham Emslie): M. Humphrey Carver (à gauche), "l'architecte" du logement au Canada, reçoit le prix des mains de M. Martin Wexler, représentant de l'ACHRU pour le Québec et vice-président du Symposium de 1989.

A meeting of minds.

Table d'honneur.

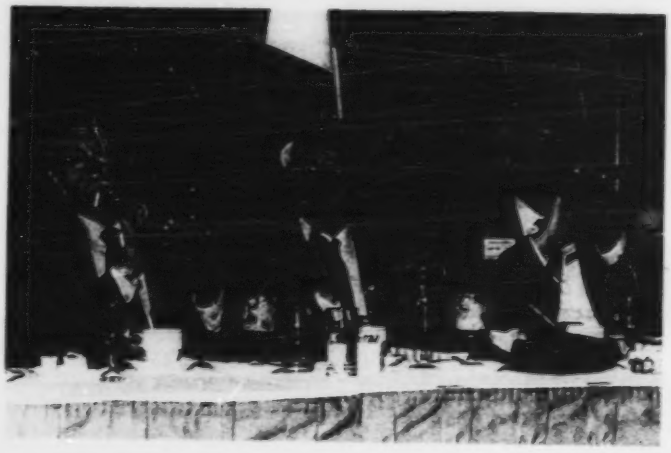
Presidential Words: A chat between George Anderson, President of CMHC (left), and Peter Trites, New Brunswick Minister of Housing.

Entre présidents: M. George Anderson, président de la SCHL (à gauche), s'entretient avec M. Peter Trites, ministre du Logement du Nouveau-Brunswick.

BANQUET DE REMISE DES PRIX DE L'ACHRU

The Honourable Alan Redway, Minister of State (Housing), and the venerable Humphrey Carver.

L'honorable Alan Redway, ministre d'État (Habitation), et M. Humphrey Carver.



Honour Roll: Jack Brown (left), the Honourable Alan Redway, and Humphrey Carver.

Liste d'honneur: M. Jack Brown (à gauche), l'honorable Alan Redway et M. Humphrey Carver.

CMHC Award of Honour: Jack Brown (right), who has contributed much to housing improvement in Ontario, receives the award from the Honourable Alan Redway, Minister of State (Housing).

Prix d'honneur de la SCHL: M. Jack Brown (à droite), qui a grandement contribué à l'amélioration du logement en Ontario, reçoit le prix des mains de l'honorable Alan Redway, ministre d'État (Habitation).

THE ECONOMICS OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

L'ASPECT ÉCONOMIQUE DU LOGEMENT ABORDABLE

George Anderson (Chair)
President
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Marion Steele
Department of Economics
University of Guelph

Francois-Xavier Roussel
Director
Laboratoire Logement, Nancy, France

David Hulchanski
Director, Centre for Human Settlements
University of British Columbia

Over the years considerable debate has occurred over whether or not our housing problems are issues of supply (the amount of land and provision of rental housing stock) or demand (incomes, taxes, and shelter allowances). In this plenary, the speakers tackle the issue of the solutions to housing affordability, which are very much a function of the outcome of the supply/demand perspective.

Au fil des années, on s'est beaucoup interrogé pour savoir si les problèmes de logement sont attribuables à l'offre (la disponibilité de terrains et de logements locatifs) ou à la demande (revenus, taxes, allocations-logements). Dans cette séance plénière, les participants discutent des solutions à l'abordabilité du logement, en particulier sous l'angle de l'offre et de la demande.

"The subject of affordability is a completely perplexing one," said the chair, George Anderson, president of CMHC, setting the stage for the session on *The Economics of Affordable Housing*. "One could argue that since we first began to look at housing policy in Canada we have been in a permanent debate about affordability and in permanent pursuit of affordable solutions to Canada's housing problems."

"The perspectives on this," he said, "are as varied as the urban and rural circumstances encountered across this great country, and the root of the problem is how affordability is defined."

"The newspapers report that we have an affordability crisis in Canada. Some data suggests that this crisis is restricted to south central Ontario, and to some extent, British Columbia. Some would say that looking at the relationship between incomes and house prices elsewhere in Canada, it is possible to conclude that the situation is not as dire as the central Canadian newspapers indicate. Others would argue that even though the equation may have improved slightly in some parts of the country, no adequate solutions to our affordability problem are at hand. The entire question of definition is one that is very critical."

"In terms of solutions," said Anderson, preparing the audience for the contrasting opinions of the session's speakers, "we have demand- and supply-side theorists arguing vociferously and eloquently for their disparate points of view."

Representing the case for demand-side policy solutions was the lead-off speaker, Marion Steele, associate professor of economics at the University of Guelph.

"On the whole, demand-side housing policies tend to be broad-based, and there has been a general retreat, at the federal level especially, from broad-based housing policies. In part, this is reflected in the current housing situation in Canada. What is needed is a balance between broad- and narrow-based policies, between demand- and supply-side policies."

By definition, explained Steele, demand-side policies are household-oriented, whereas supply-side policies are geared to suppliers and the housing stock. "Supply-side policies generally result in the creation of buildings, while demand-side policies assist individual households." Because demand-side policies do not necessarily affect demand and tend to use market mechanisms, Steele referred to them instead as household-oriented policies.

Steele's list of current Canadian housing problems include three that are commonly recognized — affordability, physical suitability, and physical adequacy — as well as two recent additions that are especially relevant in tight housing markets: security of tenure and availability (manifested in homelessness). "Affordability is the overwhelming problem, followed by security of tenure and availability. When looking for solutions, it is important that we focus our attention on the worst problems and direct our solutions to these."

Directed at the affordability and security of tenure problems are three specific household-oriented housing policies, said Steele: housing allowances and two distinct homeownership policies.

Steele would fashion a housing allowance program similar to those currently operating in several other provinces. Such a program would provide tenants with a high percentage of the difference between their rent or housing expense and an affordable proportion of their income. "In other words, it would give them a high proportion of the affordability gap."

The major difference between Steele's design and what is currently on the books, she said, would be the affordability criterion, which would be household dependent. (Thirty per cent for a two-person household; 35–40 per cent for a one-person household; 25 per cent for a three-person household; and 20 per cent for a five-person household.) Steele's system recognizes that larger households have more mouths to feed and, therefore, cannot afford to spend the same proportion of their income on rent or housing expense as smaller households.

One noticeable result of a housing allowance program, Steele said, is money is directed primarily to urban dwellers and high-cost provinces — areas now primarily targeted for social housing.

Homeownership policies in the short run, said Steele, would affect security of tenure; in the long run, affordability. Specifically, they would alleviate some of the affordability problems associated with an aging population.

"Many people do not realize the extent to which low-income households have attained homeownership," Steele told the audience. In 1987, 51 per cent of husband-wife households aged 45 to 54 and living below the poverty line in large cities were

"Cries for abolishment reflect a fundamental misunderstanding of the role of social housing. On the other hand, it is extremely important, for reasons of fairness, cost-reduction, etc., that we implement demand-side policies as well."

"If you consider account income transfer programs and expenditure programs through the tax system, the direct and indirect support for housing in Canada on an annual basis is many billions of dollars."

homeowners. Fifteen per cent of single parents living below the poverty line in large cities were homeowners. "What this means is that low-income city-based households with limited or no financial assistance have managed to achieve the Canadian dream," said Steele.

A homeownership downpayment grant or loan would help others achieve the same goal. This program would be directed to renters (those who have never owned a house) and would be available for the purchase of both new and existing housing. To make the program progressive, there would be a clawback — a reduction in eligibility for RRSP contributions. For high-income households making full use of the RRSP deduction, there would be a 100 per cent clawback. One great advantage of such a program would be the redistribution of wealth from current homeowners to renters and from high-income to low-income households.

The second homeownership program would be relatively inexpensive, said Steele, and would recognize the importance of the new phenomenon of non-traditional households — female single parents and people living alone. "In 1987, 39 per cent of single-parent homeowners were living in multiple-unit dwellings as opposed to single detached units. And most of these people were not living in condominiums but in some other form of multiple-unit."

Despite its increasing frequency, however, mortgage lenders have been slow to recognize this phenomenon. "In its social entrepreneurial role," Steele told the audience, "CMHC should go out of its way to take this new social trend into account."

In particular, said Steele, where a homeowner applicant wishes to occupy a duplex, rental income for qualification purposes should be considered directly. "At the moment, the GDS ratio generally goes up by 10 percentage points if someone wants to purchase a duplex, but this does not nearly take full account of rental income. Many low-income households that are too small to occupy and cannot afford to purchase single-detached dwellings could afford to become homeowners if the current rules were relaxed. A proportion of the mortgage insurance fund at CMHC should be used to offset expected higher default rates from this group."

There are many advantages to household-oriented policies, said Steele. The first is fairness. "These policies are available to all needy households. You do not have to wait in a queue or live in a particular kind of dwelling unit to get help from these programs. It is unfair and intolerable that a poor household in a social housing unit gets an enormous subsidy while an equally poor household operating in the private market receives nothing."

The second advantage is flexibility for the participant. "Within the constraints of their budgets, low-income households can choose where they want to live and what type of tenure arrangement they wish to have."

Differences in preference among low-income households is an important consideration, said Steele. "In Manitoba, elderly housing allowance recipients occupied more than twice as much space as the public housing elderly. In Canada in 1987, 25 and 47 per cent of very low-income households with affordability problems occupied two or more bedrooms. These people are not undeserving. They just want more rooms. Not new rooms, not large rooms, not top standard rooms, just more rooms."

"Some housing allowance recipients in Manitoba said they would cut back on food expenditures if they had to give up their

housing allowances. These people really need what they are getting."

The third advantage of demand-side policies is flexibility for providers. "Often, social housing is built and ready for occupancy after the need has passed. For example, too much social housing is being built for the elderly and too little for families. Many of our elderly would be better looked after in other ways."

The low cost per recipient of demand-side policies is another advantage. "Certainly, the per recipient cost of a housing allowance to social housing would be low," said Steele. "Even a downpayment grant would be relatively low-cost over the long term."

In addition, demand-side policies make better use of the existing stock. Supply-side policies tend to focus on new construction and ignore the often vast amount of existing stock. "It is important to consider better allocation of the current stock rather than simply the creation of new, expensive housing."

With demand-side policies, said Steele, the NIMBY problem is virtually non-existent, as the recipients are already in place and prospective low-income homeowners are not going to find vendors refusing to sell to them because they have limited incomes or because they have two kids and no husband. "There will also be a reduced 'NIMB' — Not In My Building — problem. If these people can afford to purchase a dwelling rather than rent an apartment, they will no longer have to worry about landlord rejection."

In closing, Steele told the audience that, although many economists have called for the abolishment of social housing, she believes its existence as a last resort is essential for many households that would otherwise be confronted with homelessness. "Cries for abolishment reflect a fundamental misunderstanding of the role of social housing. On the other hand, it is extremely important, for reasons of fairness, cost-reduction, etc., that we implement demand-side policies as well."

"This problem definition is a rationale for doing nothing, and it reduces the serious problem of access to affordable, adequate, and appropriate housing to an absurd level."

In his response to Marion Steele's presentation, George Anderson told the audience that Canada has one of the highest rates of homeownership in the world today. "Sixty-two per cent of Canadian households are in a homeownership position. Even in Metropolitan Toronto, homeownership rates run at about 58 per cent."

Current data indicates, however, it is becoming increasingly difficult to prompt higher rates of homeownership. "After you reach a certain point, you hit a 'glass ceiling,' at which the cost of raising homeownership levels increases exponentially. One could argue that, in the long run, this is cheaper than subsidizing social housing. But, because today's renters are not as wealthy, in relative terms, as were the renters of the previous decade, it remains more difficult to up the overall percentage of homeownership in Canada."

In terms of housing subsidies, said Anderson, it is useful to look at the problem from a broader perspective. "One tends to look at the CMHC direct expenditure budget — $1.7 billion in 1989 — as the federal government's complete contribution to housing policy. But if you take into account income transfer programs and expenditure programs through the tax system, the direct and indirect support for housing in Canada on an annual basis is many billions of dollars."

"The housing challenge of the '90s is to face the reality of this serious rental sector problem and to begin to complete Canada's housing system."

To be fair, said Anderson, one would have to look at a range of factors. One would have to examine: the several billion dollars spent annually as a percentage of the Canada Assistance Plan programs, which are 50 per cent cost-shared by the federal government and provide housing for people as part of the housing subsidy network of the federal government; the OAS and GIS payments, which are income transfers to individuals on behalf of the federal government, a portion of which go to housing and are used by low-income people to support their housing needs; the non-taxation of capital gains on the sale of houses (Over the last three years in Toronto alone, there has been a recapitalization of wealth through homeownership amounting to some $80 billion. There is no capture of tax on the resale of that housing, and this is an enormous incentive for people to get into homeownership. It constitutes, in a way, a housing expenditure of billions of dollars.); and Wilson's promise to rebate the national sales tax for those new units coming into production where an affordability problem is created.

"When you add all of this up," said Anderson, "the effective support of the federal government for housing in Canada is enormous."

According to Anderson, CMHC does recognize rental income in the purchase of duplexes. In the province of Quebec and particularly for those living in Montreal, this has been a key route to homeownership for some time.

Expanding on one of Steele's observations, Anderson concluded shelter allowances only work in certain markets. "In rural areas, where we have the worst housing problems, and in tight markets, at least in the short term," he said, "it could be argued they are highly inflationary."

The second speaker of the plenary, Francois-Xavier Roussel, the director of Laboratoire Logement in Nancy, France, began his presentation with some thoughts on the evolution of housing. Housing is a very complex issue linked to the economy, social affairs, urban planning and lifestyles, and our culture, Roussel said. "When we look at its evolution over a certain period of time, we see that housing is an accumulation of successive laws, decrees, and reforms, which only add to the complexity of the system."

According to Roussel, this evolution is not over. A fe v weeks ago, a new report on types of housing assistance was made public in France. This report describes what should be done to improve the situation.

In setting the stage for the delegates about the housing situation in France (and Europe), Roussel gave an overview of policies and approaches taken since the Second World War to house France's citizens.

During the postwar period, he said, "we were faced with a very serious quantitative crisis associated with war destruction, a shortage of supply, demographic expansion, and the reshaping of the economic landscape and industrial activities. Public authorities met this challenge by building quickly and massively, using the supply approach. They introduced new low-rent housing units, with loans at one per cent over 40 years."

But over the years, this production has changed because the French government shortly realized only part of the population — mainly the middle-class — was being reached. "So we built a range of diversified products, which resulted in a very segregated

system prior to the '70s. Depending on the level of income, we had about 10 products for rental housing and for homeownership," Roussel said.

"After a 30-year period of continuous expansion, France entered the '70s with a more unstable economic situation. During those years, we also considered the issue of social redistribution. The economic expansion had led us to believe we could provide complete social coverage in areas such as education, health, and housing. But we soon realized that choices would have to be made."

Also during that period the structure of the demand started to change, and Roussel said that the housing requirements in terms of quality and environment "grew rapidly." This meant, therefore, that the existing system based on supply was no longer satisfactory because the demand had changed.

Thus, said Roussel, "housing production became increasingly controlled by demand."

"Today, residential housing patterns are more complex, and we are faced with a new concern: the choice is not only based on the product itself but on the location and quality requirements. In this context — a greater demand for quality housing — a turning point for the French government was the 1977 reform, which resulted in a change of approach. The new policy was based on providing *personal* assistance rather than *production* assistance; in other words, providing financial assistance for homeownership and letting households choose their housing."

According to Roussel, changing from a system based on supply to a system based on demand is not easy; the 1977 policy was designed as a compromise. "The government had to increase personal assistance, while decreasing production assistance."

Because of economic factors, the new system did not completely meet its objectives. Said Roussel: "This ambitious personal assistance system supposed a regular increase in the purchasing power and also relatively high inflation. These two elements, at the beginning of the '80s, did not develop as expected. The purchasing power increased more slowly at the beginning of the '80s, and interest rate/inflation ratios were inverted — causing disinflation — while interest rates dropped only very slightly."

Since the beginning of the '80s, public policies have attempted to regulate these changes using different measures. "We were also generous with rehabilitation programs, since the 1977 reform provided assistance not only for new housing but also for the rehabilitation of existing housing. This resulted in a paradox where households who lived in deteriorating low-rent housing, once rehabilitation was carried out, had a lower rate of effort than before. This was one of the adverse effects that was corrected between 1980 and 1988," said Roussel.

"To give you an idea of the significance of the assistance provided, public contribution to housing in France is currently 100 billion francs. This contribution includes three types of assistance:

- production assistance (e.g., grants and interest reductions for new construction and rehabilitation both for rental and homeownership), as well as savings assistance, which is not negligible. In 1975, production assistance represented 35 per cent of the total assistance; today, it only represents 20 per cent;

"What is needed to solve (the lack of affordable rental housing) is an interesting and innovative combination of programs."

Question and Answer Period

Steele: I would like to say that the rental market, contrary to all reports, is alive and kicking. The problem, again, is looking at new construction and not looking at the existing stock. In 1984, there were 30,000 rental completions, but the change in the rental stock was 69,000. In 1987, the rental completions were 42,000, but the change in the rental stock was 75,000. Of those 75,000 units, 46,000 came in the stock built before 1971.

What was going on? All kinds of small entrepreneurs, possibly even a few single-parent mothers, were converting the existing stock, which was suitable for the large households of earlier days, and turning them into duplexes and triplexes. In fact (and these data come from Statistics Canada's HIFE, a sample survey), there has been a change in the nature of the rental market. Individuals now can outbid large corporations for rental units. So individuals are purchasing condominiums and then renting them out. John Miron has estimated that somewhere between 30 and 50 per cent of the condominiums in Ontario are rented out.

There has been a very large number of conversions. David Hulchanski himself has provided me with numbers on illegal suites in Vancouver. Up and down my street in Toronto, every house has several illegal suites, including mine. And I had no problem getting a mortgage from Royal Trust, who are not worried about illegal suites. (It is not NHA insured, as are none of my three mortgage holdings. I have never had to worry about all the requirements of NHA.)

Also in Toronto, CMHC keeps telling us that it is an extremely tight market.

- personal assistance, which was relatively low in the '60s, increased after the 1977 reform. In 1975, personal assistance represented 20 per cent of the total assistance; now, it represents 50 per cent; and

- fiscal assistance includes, for example, interest reductions on loans and property tax exemptions. In 1975, fiscal assistance represented 40 per cent of all assistance, only 20 per cent at the beginning of the '80s; it currently stands at between 25 per cent and 30 per cent.

"In terms of household," said Roussel, "the total assistance is approximately 4,000 to 5,000 francs per household each year. This is average compared to assistance provided in other European countries."

The high increase in personal assistance in 1984–85 brought a number of experts to question the system. The result of this examination was the creation of a Commission on Housing Assistance. The commission's report concluded, said Roussel, that the system was considered reliable, assistance could be regulated with appropriate measures, and assistance was not expected to increase in terms of financial volume for the state.

Therefore, "guidelines call for maintaining the personal assistance system, which must be streamlined, stabilized, and expanded, especially for the moderate-income populations who are not receiving assistance. We estimated half of the needy households are not receiving assistance, and 130,000 households who require assistance are not benefiting from the program. So our objective is to expand personal assistance to all moderate-income households, which supposes assistance could be provided for old, non-rehabilitated housing and for the private housing stock."

On the other hand, the state is continuing to maintain production assistance, but only for populations who are excluded and who live in areas where markets are tight.

"The trend is to continue increasing personal assistance so all households can benefit from personal assistance and to maintain a certain level of production assistance for households who are excluded and who live in designated areas," concluded Roussel.

On the global front, "we are maintaining an approach based on demand to offer a choice to as many households as possible, while creating limited-cost housing reserved exclusively for low-income groups."

Turning back to the Canadian situation, the series Hulchanski helped to research and promote is an historical review of the federal government's involvement in housing policy dating back to Confederation and taking off at the time of the 1916 Halifax explosion when it first intervened, under the War Measures Act, to provide housing for Canadians.

David Hulchanski, director for the Centre of Human Settlements at the University of British Columbia, believing it to be "a poor formulation of the problem," unlike the chair and the first speaker, chose not to enter into the demand-side/supply-side housing policy debate. Instead, Hulchanski focused on the "problem definitions" of Canada's housing anathema.

"Defining the problem," Hulchanski told the audience, "is a critical first step. If we do not define the problem correctly in the

beginning, any solutions we come up with are probably going to miss the mark. The definition of policies and programs, therefore, depends on the definition of the problem."

According to Hulchanski, there are two fundamentally different definitions of the Canadian housing problem. To clarify the two sides of the debate, he identified them as Problem Definition One and Problem Definition Two.

Problem Definition One states that the housing system is not functioning adequately. According to this view, Canada's housing institutions were not designed to cope with the new set of conditions that came about in the early '70s (high inflation rates, fluctuating and high interest rates, condominium ownership, speculation or the use of housing as an investment vehicle, and gentrification and displacement); the housing needs of lower-income people were not being adequately addressed by the housing system even before the '70s; and in many major metropolitan areas, especially Toronto and Vancouver, market failure has occurred in the private rental sector.

Problem Definition Two states that Canada's housing problems are temporary aberrations owing to macro-economic conditions and government-created market imperfections. According to this view, housing market and associated housing institutions are generally adequate and structurally sound; any problems that may exist from time to time are temporary and not inherent to the structure of the housing institutions themselves; and the problems some groups are experiencing are the result of unstable macro-economic conditions and housing market imperfections caused by government interventions, such as rent controls. In other words, said Hulchanski, we do have some housing problems, but our housing institutions and our housing system are basically fine and should not be tampered.

Under Problem Definition Two, with which Hulchanski told the audience he does not agree, the prevailing belief is that Canada has an income rather than a housing problem. "This is true by definition. Poor people cannot afford expensive commodities, and in our society, the most expensive commodity is housing," said Hulchanski.

Not only does this argument use circular logic, said Hulchanski, it has no practical policy implications. "Look at Canada's record on income redistribution. Income distribution did not change between 1951 and 1986. Look at our record on funding income programs, our welfare system. Are they adequate? Why do we have food banks? Look at our record of opposition redistribution. If you compile a list of people and lobby groups who make this argument and another list of people who oppose redistribution policies, better welfare, etc., the two lists will almost match. You will end up with one list of people."

"This problem definition is a rational for doing nothing, and it reduces the serious problem of access to affordable, adequate, and appropriate housing to an absurd level. We do not talk about good health care as an income problem. We try to deliver good health care by whatever method we can. We do not talk about education as an income problem. We try to deliver education in the best way we can."

Hulchanski has another contention with Problem Definition Two. If the housing problem is temporary, then temporary solutions are required. "We tried this in the '70s with temporary subsidy programs intended to help the private sector through a difficult period. We had the MURB program on and off for about six years, ARP for three or four years, and the Canada Rental Supply program for a couple of years in the early '80s. But, Well, between 1985 and 1987, the number of advertisements in Toronto newspapers for apartments rose by 68 per cent. Between 1987 and 1980, the number of condominiums for rent went up by 500 per cent. Between 1987 and 1988, the number of apartment ads increased dramatically. I bought a *Toronto Star* coming down here, and my estimate is that there are probably about 4,000 units offered for rent on a Monday in this newspaper, with a fair number below $500. I couldn't do the statistics, but I believe rents have fallen in Toronto quite substantially recently.

So, what the economists had said was going to happen did happen. The high rents in Toronto encouraged all kinds of entrepreneurs to buy up places and convert them, and they are now having problems renting them and so are reducing the rent. There is, I might say, a problem with the CMHC vacancy survey: If you are looking at the availability of cars, you don't count volkswagen bugs; you count what it is that is actually being put on the market. And the market has dramatically changed in the last five or six years.

Housing allowances are not inflationary. The reason they are not inflationary is that the recipients already are paying more than they want for housing and they don't move; they don't go to bigger and better housing; they stay where they are. There is no increase in demand, so long as you don't have a very rich housing allowance. Those economists who said there would be an increase in demand, and an inflationary impact, are making their predictions on the basis of obsolete elasticity estimates. In the United States's housing allowance experiment, this was the major surprise, and economists were just

dumbfounded. The experiment, they discovered, had been improperly designed because they assumed such a large response of households. But there was not a demand response; therefore, there was not an inflationary response.

My other point is that housing differs from health because people just want to be cured, whereas, in the case of housing, some single-parent mothers want two or three bedrooms in an older house, some elderly widows who are very poor want to live in a dwelling unit with two bedrooms rather than in a new social housing unit, and some couples want two bedrooms in an old house rather than one bedroom, and want to live in a particular location. There is much more diversity of preferences in housing, which is why you need a diversity in the stock. I was very glad to hear from France that they have, in fact, understood these things and are now providing for a diversity of alternatives for households.

Anderson: If the experiment shows that a significant proportion of the population eligible for housing allowances doesn't apply for them, that is not a sign of success of the policy.

Steele: This is one of the reasons why we need continued social housing, why there should be subsidy for all housing, because a lot of people will never apply for social housing; they will never apply for a housing allowance. So they will get nothing unless there is something.

Anderson: Concerning the list of housing subsidies I was discussing earlier for you to think about in terms of the total federal investment in housing, I quite agree that the $100,000 exemption on capital gains, which Wilson first

especially in the tighter housing markets of large Canadian cities, our housing problems are worse today than they were five or 10 years ago. How temporary is tempora y?"

Turning to Problem Definition One, the inadequate functioning of the housing system, Hulchanski told the audience that if Canada is to make any progress in finding solutions to its housing problems, we need to recognize that our housing system in incomplete.

"Whether we like it or not," said Hulchanski, "we have a homeownership sector that works. And that is quite an achievement. If you have money, you can buy a house in Canada. Hundreds of people are willing to build or sell you a house. All you need is money, and the system will work fine for you."

What does not work, said Hulchanski, is the rental sector, and this is why the system is incomplete. "Thiry-eight per cent of the households in Canada are renting households and will, for the most part, remain renting households as we reach the homeownership threshold. Over the past 10 or 15 years, however, Toronto and Vancouver have experienced private rental market failure. This is a very serious problem as the majority of renting households depend on the private sector to meet their accommodation needs."

The renter's protection against poor landlords or inadequate housing conditions is new supply. Renters depend on the private sector to provide them with new rental units, with reasonable vacancy rates, so they can have the luxury of choice. In the larger metropolitan areas, however, this is not happening.

"The housing challenge of the 1990s," said Hulchanski, "is to face the reality of this serious rental sector problem and to begin to complete Canada's housing system."

In 1983, following the British example, the conservative provincial government of British Columbia abolished rent controls. B.C. was in the midst of an economic recession at the time, and subsequently, rents did not experience a significant increase. However, there were no new rental starts either. Even during the tremendous demand period of Expo '86, said Hulchanski, there were virtually no new rental starts. And now, as Vancouver is experiencing a major boom, there have been only 4,000 rental starts in Vancouver over the past two years.

"We have near zero vacancy rates; we are witnessing the demolition of our existing rental stock; and we are experiencing the conversion of rental stock and MURBS to condominiums."

The B.C. experiment, said Hulchanski, is a failure, but the government at least realizes there has been market failure in the private rental sector. In response, the social credit party appointed Peter Thomas, a well-known entrepreneur in the real estate business and the Canadian founder of the Century 21 real estate empire, as chair of the British Columbia Housing Management Corporation. His mandate is to somehow bring on stream 4,000 new rental units. "What is really important is the government has recognized the private sector cannot do it by itself and cannot do it without some form of subsidy. It has realized that what is needed to solve this problem is an interesting and innovative combination of programs."

This past spring, said Hulchanski, the City of Vancouver joined forces with several union pension funds and a group of large developers with long-time experience in the housing sector to form a philanthropy at 14 per cent in an effort to create, on leased land, non-inflationary housing for the city's middle-income renters.

According to Hulchanski, Canadians broadly agree Problem Definition One is the correct definition of the housing problem

and focus must be on the private rental sector, since this is where the major problem lies. "The real problem of the '90s, however," he said, "is access to affordable, adequate, and appropriate housing, an issue that relates justice, fairness, and human rights. It is difficult to achieve, and it will require action on the part of government at all levels in co-operation with private as well as non-profit organizations."

Hulchanski concluded his remarks by referring to Humphrey Carver's *Houses for Canadians* (1948, University of Toronto Press), which identified the "ultimate housing problem" as the problem of housing low-income Canadians. "He realized then that the private rental sector would be unable to do the job adequately because the bottom line is that there is just no money in it. And we are facing that crunch today. A strong advocate of housing supply programs and the forerunner to us all, Humphrey Carver understood that government must recognize this reality and institute a more active series of housing programs, whether they be better incomes policies for people, better housing supply programs, or a combination of the two."

Wrapping up the session, George Anderson pointed to the uncertainty of the economic climate in Canada as one possible reason for market failure in the private rental sector.

"In the early '70s, Canada left behind a period of relatively predictable, uninterrupted growth and entered into economic uncertainty. Just as we seemed to be coming out of that period, interest rates went through the ceiling. This led to the creation of provincial rent control policies, some of which have now been removed, the theory being that as soon as rent controls were abolished, the entrepreneurs would rush back in and build again. But, this is not happening (except in a disguised way through condominium construction, much of which ends up in the high-priced end of the rental market)."

According to Anderson, there has been a philosophical change in the attitude of the housing industry. "Organizations are no longer prepared to gamble on long-term asset accumulation and return, primarily because they have no faith in the ability of the political system to maintain a consistent single policy over a long period of time."

The prevailing attitude among entrepreneurs, said Anderson, is they can get in and out of the condominium market in a year and avoid the risks associated with long-term rental accommodation holdings. "The uncertainty of a long-term return added to all the other factors Hulchanski mentioned are real considerations. If you had one hundred dollars to invest and could either get in and out of your investment in a very short period of time or gamble on long-term government policy at three levels to decide your return, which would you choose? Distrustful of the long-term policy environment, many entrepreneurs have understandably decided to go for the quick hit."

announced as $500,000 and then tailored to $100,000, prompted an enormous rush in investment in small-scale rental projects. Our own data and the pressure from our borrowers to change our qualifications to allow this kind of investment is substantial evidence of that. So a large part of that money, which is a tax expenditure, as the economists say, ended up in housing stock that is mostly of modest rents.

Hulchanski: When you look at these arguments, there is the use of aggregate national data, which tends to hide more than it tells us as Canada is a very big country with diverse housing markets. We know that each city has many submarkets, so it is important to look at what is happening in a particular city.

The condominiums for rent are not a solution to the rental housing problem. They may be rental for a period, but they are one of the most unstable forms of tenure.

The reason for so many newspaper ads is that the high end of the rental sector is oversaturated with very expensive units, condo units, and regular apartments. As it takes a long time to rent them, the owners run many ads. Also, all these people buying a condo as an investment hoping for the appreciation in that asset have to ask high rents to break even. As soon as they feel they are losing their shirt, they sell. When the market is hot in a big urban area, those units are sold to owner/occupiers as starter homes, for people who want to live in inner Toronto or Vancouver.

We have an extremely severe rental housing problem in some markets. For this reason we have to look at specific markets, and not some national aggregate data, to defend a certain point of view. I don't feel I

am being dogmatic, but we have to be realistic and pragmatic and look at real housing markets and at places where people really live.

Steele: There are three times as many ads for small apartments as for condominiums in the *Toronto Star*. Three times.

I would like M. Roussel and Marion Steele to comment more on the topic of assistance to first-time purchasers of housing. At the conference yesterday, we talked about the inappropriateness of demand-side assistance in the Toronto or southern Ontario region or in Vancouver, but in other areas of the country, assistance to first-time buyers is important. To what extent in France, or in Marion Steele's model, should we be aiding first-time buyers? Obviously, the capital gain that can be realized once the house sells doesn't apply. What types of aid should we be providing and to whom in terms of first-time buyers?

Steele: A housing allowance scheme should apply not only to renters but also to homeowners and non-RGI occupants of social housing. Many of Manitoba's recipients, I understand, are non-RGI occupants of social housing. I believe that it is extremely important in this country that we have had some people who are now very wealthy for no good reason except good luck. They happened to buy a house at the right time, in the right place. This is one of the reasons for my believing it is important to have some kind of a downpayment grant for those people who have lost out — and a lot of the people who have lost out are the young. I think the Quebec policy, where a second mortgage is basically given as a downpayment grant, is a good policy.

To the extent that people were directed into the existing stock, there simply was a change in the tenure of the existing stock rather than an increase in the quantity of the housing demanded. For instance, if you get somebody just buying what they are already living in, then this is not an increase in the demand for housing. This is just a change in tenure.

Q: You can't separate the rental market from the homeownership market. That house prices are going through the roof in Toronto has created two effects: More and more people cannot afford to buy houses so we have more and more tenants competing for the few units that we have; and the rental units that could also be owner-occupied units, such as houses and condominiums, have become part of the problem because existing tenants either see their rents go up because the new owner's mortage has increased or are evicted because someone has bought their unit who wants to move in. I don't think you can look at the rental market without taking into account the homeownership market. I also think that the problems of tenants in Toronto are not going to be addressed until we take a look at what has happened to the price of housing units and stop speculation that increases the rate of inflation.

Q: I would just like to say that I was quite impressed with the chair's remarks citing the amount of money the federal government spends on housing —$1.7 billion per year. However, I am somewhat concerned as to whether that money is producing the results we had hoped to get.

I was also most impressed with the ideas and the innovative programs given to us by the gentleman from France. I believe your idea of sending 50 per cent of Canada Mortgage and Housing staff there for a while is an excellent one.

Anderson: It strikes me if one looks, not at the two-year history or the five-year history or even the 20-year but beyond that, what Canadian policy-makers of all stripes have found is that there is no one stream of solution to Canadian housing problems. They are diverse, they are different. Markets are

different. Obviously, Toronto and Vancouver have different market situations than Winnipeg, Halifax, and Saint John. As a nation, we tend to be very pragmatic in the way we go at these things; by going at them through a variety of instruments, including shelter allowance programs, which federal cost-sharing allows the provinces to afford such programs. I don't think at the federal level we advocate a single set of solutions. We try to be practical. We have 600,000 socially assisted housing units in Canada, and I don't think the recipients give a damn under what ideology or philosophy they were created. They are thankful for them. While we are attacked by ideologies on all sides, together we can make some progress.

The other interesting thing that is starting to preoccupy us is not the fight over statistics about penetration and who gets what dollars, but the development of our cities and the impact of affordability on the way our urban centres as a whole are developing. To look at housing policy in isolation, to look at a house as simply four walls, is a short-sighted, dangerous tendency. Houses are built in urban centres; transportation networks; concerns about environment; concerns about health care; exclusionary zoning at local levels; municipalities willing to accept the poor who are now saying, "We are carrying a disproportionate load of the welfare system of Canada as a whole"; and de-institutionalization of psychiatric patients in Ontario. These are problems that require co-operative efforts by all levels of government and departments within government.

We have come through an era in the '70s where we have argued about solutions. We now believe it is about time we started to work together to find better solutions and to build better cities in this country.

INCOME AND HOUSING POLICIES

POLITIQUES EN MATIÈRE DE REVENUS ET DE LOGEMENT

Georgio Gaudet (Chair)
President
New Brunswick Housing Corporation

Bill Bosworth
Executive Officer
Homes First Society, Toronto

Havi Echenberg
Executive Director
National Anti-Poverty Organization

Jean-Louis Lapointe
Vice-President
Administration and Development
Société d'habitation du Québec

The relationship between income support policies and access to housing is emerging as a dominant theme across Canada. Do we really have a housing problem? Or are the housing issues in Canada a reflection of the problems associated with poverty? These and other equally pressing concerns were debated among the speakers in this particular session.

Le rapport entre les politiques relatives au supplément de revenu et l'accès au logement est en voie de devenir un thème dominant au Canada. Existe-t-il réellement un problème de logement au Canada ou les questions de logement sont-elles un reflet des problèmes liés à la pauvreté? Ces questions et d'autres toutes aussi urgentes ont été débattues par les participants et participantes dans le cadre de cette séance spéciale.

Calling the relationship between income and housing policies the eternal debate, the chair, Georgio Gaudet, introduced Bosworth, an ordained minister, as the first speaker of the session. Bosworth, an ordained minister, also manages a hostel; is past-president and member of the board of directors of House Link Community Homes (which develops co-ops and rental housing for ex-psychiatric patients); was a member of the Toronto task force on housing for low-income single people in 1983; has co-authored two publications, one called *Urban People in Poverty: Toward an Alternative Model of Ministry*, and the other examining the case for long-term housing.

Echoing the words of David Hulchanski, a panelist at the plenary session on the *Economics of Affordable Housing*, Bosworth told the audience that the most difficult thing about income and housing policies is defining them. He compared the debate over housing versus income to a CERTS commercial: two mints in one. "The cross-over of housing policy and social policy in this country has traditionally confused everyone. To a great extent, housing policy is economic policy, but it is also social policy in its identification of such goals as the creation of family and community stability."

Bosworth summarized the premise of housing policy in Canada as follows: "The market does it all, and there is a safety net for the rest." That summary, he said, is the problem. "What we should be aiming at is market diversity, so people seeking accommodation can choose between non-profit sector housing developments and full-profit sector housing developments (homeownership)." That choice does not exist in our current housing markets or housing policy. "What we have now is a very strictly segmented housing market where the poor have no choices, or only a series of bad choices. Homeownership is beyond their means and, therefore, beyond their reach."

Although a high percentage of Canadians, including those in the low-income bracket, are in a homeownership position, said Bosworth, this statistic can only decrease given the recent changes in the structure of the housing market. "Low-income people want the same things in life that everybody else wants. They just cannot afford them. They want a decent place to live and some security of tenure. Some aspire to homeownership; others want nothing to do with it, simply desiring a decent place to rent where somebody else takes care of the problems." As with everyone else, said Bosworth, the goals and wishes of low-income earners change over the period of a lifetime. They may want to start off in an modest apartment, but when they have their families they want to move up to multi-bedroom dwellings. Then, when the children are grown and gone, they may want to go back to something smaller.

"The problem with our housing and social policies," said Bosworth, "is they tend to operate on the premise that low-income people have different needs than everybody else In my experience, their needs are the same; they just never get a chance to express them." Because our goals for social housing include things other than mere income re-distribution, said Bosworth, arguments can be made for a mix of social housing, as well as for community planning and participation in the social housing process.

These arguments are especially important, said Bosworth, in light of the increasing mobility of Canadians. "We may have a high degree of homeownership, but the economic system is forcing us to move every three years." This mobility has some severe social consequences. "Family, and especially friendship relationships and neighbourhood familiarity, never have a chance to become well-established. Because low-income people do not participate easily in the cash economy but depend instead on informal exchanges of resources and support, the failure to establish these relationships is costly. Children's aid, the health care, educational, and legal systems, and the entire network of social services are forced to provide poor people with many things they would provide for themselves in a stable, exchange-oriented community."

Homes First Society of Toronto, for which Bosworth is president, is an organization that develops and manages community-based permanent housing primarily for low-income single displaced men, women, and families. The buildings the organization has developed support the idea that stable communities are critical to independence and self-supportiveness.

According to Bosworth, the group's first building has been in operation for more than five years. Nearly one-third of the people living in the building have been there since it first opened. "These are people who had previously been transient," said Bosworth, "people who had been in the hostel system or on the street."

"We should be aiming at market diversity, so people seeking accommodation can choose between non-profit sector housing developments and full-profit sector housing developments."

"What we have is a strictly segmented housing market where the poor have no choices, or only a series of bad choices."

By rough calculation and in terms of cost savings to other aspects of the social service system, Bosworth told the audience, the building has nearly been paid for. Since moving into the building, many tenants have been successful in achieving things they were unable to accomplish when living on the streets and in hostels. "For some of our tenants, their stay in our building represents the longest period of time they have lived away from mental institutions. Some of our female tenants have been able to reassemble their families. Some tenants have been able to secure and hold down entry-level jobs long enough to step up to better-paying employment."

In some cases, tenants have managed to overcome social problems simply by being placed in an atmosphere where they are given an element of control and stability. "Alcoholics have experienced improved health and dramatic decreases in alcohol consumption without the aid of treatment programs, simply because they are now living in a social atmosphere where they have security of tenure and some input into the administration of the building."

The building has also served as a base for many low-income earners who move in, stay a few months, and then move on. Often, they move ahead into something better, said Bosworth, but equally as often, the move is a lateral or backward one.

The building has served a great many low-income people in a number of ways, said Bosworth. "What makes it work is a stable core of people who are, basically, the community's political activists: They run the building, establish the rules, and work on the various committees. And these are people who were not allowed to tie their shoes alone a few years ago."

"One of the alternate goals of housing policy — the creation of stable communities — is achievable," said Bosworth, "but not easily so with the kind of policies we have had. Our buildings and our administration have gone against the grain in many ways. If propositions such as this received broad acceptance in the sector, however, we would see a much greater increase in the achievement of social goals through housing policy."

Returning again to the problem definition, Bosworth said that the real problem is not income or income distribution but equity build-up. "Over their lifetimes, low-income people pay far more for housing than high-income people because they are unable to build equity. They are continually paying increasingly higher rents. Even in the inflated Toronto housing market, a person who is able to buy a house today gets that money back in 25 or 30 years, plus virtually everything they have had to put into it over that period of time. The net cost for housing over their lifetime, then, is virtually zero."

In some low-income areas of the United States, said Bosworth, this has been recognized. and homeownership programs and appropriate homeownership programs have been instituted. "This is an area where Canadian housing policy has failed dramatically and one at which we must take a more serious look in terms of building community stability. Through community land trusts or collective or non-profit ownership, we could take a significant amount of our social housing stock out of the equity cycle and put it into a low-income-owned non-equity pool. The equity build-up could be split to provide for condominiums for the poor. People could buy an apartment with their welfare cheques instead of just paying rent."

In conclusion, Bosworth said a number of other options emerge when social goals and housing policy are re-examined. Instead of becoming involved in a debate over income versus supply, he

advised, housing providers should look at opportunities that exist for achieving social goals through a wide array of financially structured arrangements.

Following Bosworth's remarks and as an aside, Gaudet noted that often social housing models used to serve seniors are adapted to meet the needs of the poor. As various equity build-up instruments are currently being applied to the development of housing for seniors, he said, the suggestion that the principle be extended for others is both original and useful.

Despite focusing her remarks on the income side of the issue, Havi Echenberg, executive director of the National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO), agreed with Bosworth's suggestion that problems exist with both income and housing policies.

"When social policy people, without a grounding in housing issues, begin to look at the mix of income delivery and service delivery that could eliminate poverty, housing never fits," said Echenberg. "It is one of those issues that isn't neatly divided. Having accepted there is going to be a great deal of private-sector delivery, we cannot propose universal public delivery. Yet, simply looking just at the income side is not very helpful."

In light of current government debt control and deficit reduction practices that tend to slash rather than augment social expenditures, Echenberg did not offer visionary solutions to the problem. "Although a guaranteed annual income might be an answer to the problem," she said, "I stay within the realm of the real and the existing rather than stray into the sphere of what we could hope to have in a different world."

Studying the income side of the issue, Echenberg remarked upon recent reports on social assistance systems from across the country, noting that each province is legally required, under its shared welfare cost agreement with the federal government, to establish a level of assistance sufficient to cover food, shelter, and clothing. A May 1988 report by the Social Planning and Research Council of B.C., *Regaining Dignity: An Examination of Subsistance Costs and the Adequacy of Assistance Rates in B.C.*, however, found the following to be true: Only half of the single women were able to find apartments that came in under the social assistance maximum shelter allowance component; 67 per cent of childless couples could find apartments at that rate; 64 per cent of single parents with one child; 28 per cent of single parents with two children; and 25 per cent of two-parent families with two children. "Clearly, in B.C.," said Echenberg, "the current levels are not adequate."

In January 1988, the New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women published *Women and Financial Assistance in New Brunswick: A Preliminary Study*, which discovered that an average family on financial assistance and reliant on the rental market for housing was spending 65 per cent of its income on rent alone. "A single parent with two children," said Echenberg, "spends 64 per cent of his or her income for a two-bedroom unit in Moncton, and 72 per cent for a two-bedroom unit in Fredericton. Two parents with two children spend 53 per cent of their combined incomes for a three-bedroom unit in Edmonston, and 75 per cent for a three-bedroom unit in Bathurst."

Another New Brunswick report, said Echenberg, this one by the province's housing task force (which was widely described in the media as the task force on poverty) and entitled *Home Sweet Home?* found the majority of 3,500 single social assistance

"Low-income people want the same things in life that everybody else wants. They just cannot afford them."

recipients were paying more than half their income on shelter that had been found to be inadequate. More than one in five youths served by social agencies had no fixed address and no income at all. In Prince Edward Island, an April 1989 Welfare Assistance Review Committee report found that a surprising 75 per cent of social assistance recipients living outside institutions were living in rental accommodation. Seventy per cent of the public- and private-sector units surveyed in Charlottetown in 1983 were found to be substandard, defined as "uninhabitable or in need of major repair." Despite the fact P.E.I. recipients have a relatively high shelter subsidy that covers real costs (including utilities), 14 per cent of recipients had shelter costs exceeding the maximum. The report recommended an increase in the number of available non-profit units, as well as an increase in the maximum shelter allowance.

In Nova Scotia, a City of Halifax task force on income support programs found the current rates were inadequate to cover food, shelter, and clothing costs. It cited these insufficient rates as the primary inadequacy of the system and recommended that the shelter allowance component of social assistance rates reflect realistic averages of shelter costs (few of them do, according to Echenberg). A provincial task force made the same recommendation.

"We can argue about governments' varying priorities, but Ontario does have more money than most provinces and its $119 million will not even solve the problem."

In Ontario, the 1987 Social Assistance Review Committee report found that the average percentage of assistance going to rents exceeded every reasonable benchmark and was often as high as 50 to 70 per cent of income, even in areas outside Toronto. "The report recommended the average cost of shelter be established as a ceiling, and in the 1988 spring provincial budget, shelter benefits were increased to a ceiling of $600 a month for a single parent with two children, which is still probably inadequate in some markets. The cost of this increase alone is estimated at $119 million."

Given that associated costs are this high, said Echenberg, expecting provincial governments to increase income sufficient to cover the cost of housing on the private market is highly unrealistic. "We can argue about varying governments and their priorities, but Ontario does have more money than most provinces; and even its $119 million will not even solve the problem. This kind of expenditure in most provinces would be prohibitive."

Operating on the twin assumptions that government dollars be used to invest in long-term solutions and that public dollars not be used to subsidize private profits, Echenberg believes some public delivery is necessary. Quoting contrasting "cost of housing" and income adequacy examples from the Ontario and P.E.I. reports, Echenberg cited the following. In Ontario, two major overall themes — affordability and supply — dominate. Solutions that address only one of these problems are doomed to failure. If recommendations are made in isolation to render housing affordable without addressing the chronically tight supply, social assistance dollars would likely become simply another marketplace force that would drive prices even higher." In P.E.I., "since 1983, there have been significant increases in the number of available units in Charlottetown and Summerside, as well as in the larger rural villages. Some of this can be attributed to efforts by CMHC and the P.E.I. Housing Corporation to directly or indirectly fund the construction of low-rental units across the province. Also, the interest of non-profit community groups in sponsoring housing projects for low-income people has contributed significantly to a better housing market."

By and large, however, said Echenberg, social assistance is not a very secure source of income. With housing, the issues are affordability and security of tenure; with social assistance, the main concerns are adequacy and security of income. "According to their social assistance reviews," she said, "virtually all provinces are attempting to move people from social assistance to paid employment. Some provincial methods are helpful; others punitive." In the case of Ontario, for example, most available jobs are in areas where rents are unaffordable. In that province, therefore, people are being encouraged to take employment in cities where they cannot possibly afford housing. The situation is similar in P.E.I. There is very little public transit on the island connecting one city to another. Many employment opportunities, therefore, require relocation, generally in communities with higher rents than those in the communities left behind.

"The provincial government in Saskatchewan," said Echenberg, "is the nemesis of the poor. It has by far the most punitive system and has been known to operate an illegal work-for-welfare system. People were required to move to areas such as Prince Albert to take paid employment. Unfortunately, there was but one apartment building in that city, and it had no vacancies. There was literally no rental accommodation available at all."

While the private sector is reasonably good at identifying consumer demand where consumers have the ability to pay, said Echenberg, in areas where consumers do not have the money to match their demand, the private sector understandably does not build rental housing. This makes transition for employment, in many instances, next to impossible. "There is a role for social housing then," said Echenberg, "not only to meet an affordability issue but to assist in unreasonable transitions, which are being encouraged, if not enforced, by provincial governments."

Without being able to offer any magical solutions, Echenberg suggested, if 20 to 30 per cent of the rental units on the market were owned by the non-profit sector and if incomes were adequate to meet the real costs of food, shelter, and clothing, it might be possibe to create a system that would provide for a reasonable and affordable balance between income levels and the price of housing.

In response, Gaudet noted that in terms of the Canada Assistance Plan, there is no provincial perception of legislative inadequacy. In fact, he said, there has been an academic debate as to whether an adequacy feature is even included in the plan.

Jean-Louis Lapointe, the vice-president of administration and development for the Société d'habitation du Québec and the past chair of the Quebec City Commission (whose mandate was to review the city's institutional, structural, economic, financial, fiscal, and management problems), opened his remarks by commenting on the relationship between income support policies and access to housing. Such a relationship, he noted, is becoming a dominant theme in Canada. "But this conclusion is not surprising considering the amount of funds allocated to income support to satisfy housing needs."

This "far-reaching" issue involves the very existence of housing problems, which are presented as a reflection of the problems associated with poverty. "There is no need to convince ourselves of the existence of housing problems, especially when they are associated with the issue of poverty," said Lapointe.

There are no definitive solutions to these issues because we have to rely on the financial capacity of the State.

Question and Answer Period

Q: As a chartered accountant, I have spent quite a lot of time recently preparing tax returns for people who have very small incomes. One of the injustices I would like to draw your attention to is people who are substantially below the poverty line, as defined by Statistics Canada, who pay significant amounts of income tax. In Ontario, some of this is offset by an allowance from the Ontario government, but all it amounts to is a transfer payment from the provincial to the federal government; in the long run, these people, some of whom are earning less than $10,000 a year, are still paying income taxes. It is a horribly regressive system, and I don't think anybody has ever raised that as a matter of concern.

Echenberg: The matter has been raised endlessly, in particular, with the finance minister. I would just like to point out that the continuing de-indexation of the tax system means more and more and more poor people will pay taxes every year.

Q: In terms of looking at assistance within housing as a form of income assistance, we gain some things by looking at the interaction between those two systems. I agree with the panelists that they are inextricably linked: Homelessness is poverty and poverty is homelessness. But one could also look at assistance administered through housing as a kind of second-level social assistance system — which certainly seems to conform to the experience of low-income people with whom I work. If you reach a certain level of poverty under the social assistance system and if you become desperate enough, then you can

qualify for a second level and get into a subsidized unit in social housing administered through a points system that measures desperate need. I think that this kind of pattern — where we force people to reach the point where they are in such desperate poverty or in such an untenable domestic situation that they then click into a second social assistance system allowing them to get into a more tenable situation — is an unfortunate way of applying social assistance.

However, I am more concerned about the situation where the assistance is administered through other forms of housing provision, such as non-profit co-ops and others, where different kinds of criteria are in place for allowing people to get in. Often, in the case of municipal non-profits, it is a matter of surviving a three- or four-year waiting list. This means there are 16- or 17-year olds, or recently arrived immigrants, who are not going to have access to that housing and are, therefore, being denied access to a kind of second-level social assistance they may be desperately needing.

This whole issue raises, for me, the question of universality of access to social assistance. I believe that access to housing issues have to be looked at, not just in the context of housing itself but in terms of the universality of any kind of social assistance or income redistribution systems we have in place.

Bosworth: You are right in identifying a second level of social assistance. The amount of money that goes into subsidizing people and housing in this country is quite enormous. The problem is the rules change if your requirement for assistance rises above a certain dollar level. Through the tax system we subsidize people in homeownership. We subsidize rental stock

The problem, he said, is mainly due to lasting financial problems that prevent access to housing. Many factors can explain this situation, including two: One, all available studies confirm that financial access to housing is, and remains, the major problem for households faced with housing problems; two, the capacity of regular housing assistance programs, whether they involve new construction, social housing, homeownership, rehabilitation, or the rental of existing housing, is largely inferior to the needs identified in terms of financial accessibility.

Faced with this situation, several provinces have established housing allocation programs designed to improve the treatment provided to clienteles with the same needs, said Lapointe. Currently, five provinces are funding such programs and are assuming the costs.

He went on: "Obviously, the evolution of housing assistance measures brings us closer to the problem of income support. Since housing allocations are a support measure designed for the person, we easily understand that they can be associated with income support."

"In the same manner," he added, "the re-evaluation of income support policies initiated in Canada will only amplify the significance of today's theme. Income support programs reach several households who are not receiving social assistance, and I would say that they often reach households who have the same income level as those targeted by housing assistance programs."

Such a complex issue is not easy to solve, concluded Lapointe. "But it depends on the effectiveness of housing assistance programs and the harmonization of policies that affect a clientele whose needs are often similar."

Lapointe stressed that "the means associated with the supply problem have the advantage of providing a better opportunity to control cost increases and to solve affordability questions." Yet, given this fact, it is necessary that we all recognize that "we have to try to find even more effective means for solving poverty problems. For this reason, and as the only way of solving the financial problems preventing access to housing, we have no choice but to improve income support measures."

In response to the panelists, Gaudet cautioned that, whatever arguments are used to have programs fall under the responsibility of either the income support or housing sectors, it is important the programs remain in a sector that is associated with the needs of the population. "I would even argue for their remaining in a sector that defends housing interests because there is a serious risk of losing the mission or the essence of programs designed to meet the needs of the population. Ergo, I believe housing allocations should remain under the responsibility of a sector associated with housing," said Gaudet.

breaks and so on, but as soon as we start subsidizing people on social assistance, the rules change as to how they can use that money and where the money goes. In fact, the subsidy shifts away from the person who is getting the assistance and toward the producer. The monthly subsidy cheque in social housing goes to the housing company; it doesn't go to the tenant. So they pay 70, 80 bucks, or 100, 200 dollars, depending on their income, but they don't see the cheque that is the balance. I am arguing that we get rid of the rule change at that income break. I think it is achievable, but we have to start thinking about it in those terms.

Gaudet: This same situation was presented to me yesterday. I had an employee who lives in Grand Manaan, in the Bay of Fundy and a two-hour ferry ride from the mainland. We are building three rural and native housing units on the island — much to the chagrin of some of the people on the island, despite the fact there is a pretty pressing need there. We are putting two units on a street. This employee brought me a picture of a sign that has been posted, which reads: "Welfare Avenue." Underneath this same sign are dollar signs that read: "Your tax dollars at work." It is kind of interesting, but it speaks to what is that second level.

We are on the supply side because we can control costs. When you are on the demand side, you are in the more broader eligibility type of notion because if you are eligible, you are eligible. If you have kids, you are eligible for family allowance. But the supply side only supplies so much. And you control the dollars. So eligibility is significantly more controlled by using the supply-side approach than the demand-side approach. It is a simplistic observation, but I think that is why we are there. And that is probably why it is going to be difficult for us to get out of it.

Q: Could you say something more about why New Brunswick didn't go into housing allowances for families? I agree totally that housing allowances should stay with housing ministries because of the role of the maximum rent and the contribution rate, which should be consistent with other housing policies. But I am very interested in hearing about families.

Gaudet: Timing is so critical in policy development and program administration. Often, if you have the right combination of people to push a policy thrust and the timing is right, you can make some movement. It seems to me, clearly, the housing thrust got taken off that particular program and became an income transfer measure. If you look at Ontario, $117 million additional cost went into introducing a shelter variable component. Even if we had wanted to introduce such a program to single-parent families, we were dealing with 10,000 units, coupled with a shelter supplement. What we have been discussing on a federal/provincial basis and one of the concerns that CMHC has with shelter allowance is, are you going to deal with the adequacy problem? Are you going to respect the 30 per cent so-called benchmark? Some of us have been saying, "Well, maybe not, but if you at least provide a level of shelter allowance — whatever that level is — it at least alleviates the problem for a more significant group of people than the supply-side approach we are using now." But the penetration may not be down to 30 per cent. So you may do more that way, but you resolve less the problem of affordability.

That is an important issue, but I think the more critical one for policymakers is, if you put on the demand side everybody who is theoretically eligible is eligible, it becomes a right. And how do you control costs? I don't know if we would have the experience that they have had in France in saying half of the people who are potentially eligible are not taking up on it. I find that rather perplexing. I don't understand it.

Echenberg: I reacted when you said if you do it on the demand side, you create a right. Of course, Canada has signed international covenants that, in fact, say we recognize that right to shelter.

Gaudet: I have never seen a covenant put anything on the table.

Q: I was very interested in M. Lapointe's opening statement that the problem is obvious and everyone agrees it has to be alleviated. However, all across Canada, we have run into one similar problem. When we can get improved housing for people in a state of poverty, society benefits because these people are more stable in their home life, education levels improve, and employment levels rise. But this doesn't happen to everyone. People are human beings, and some human beings just aren't going to accept whatever plate you put before them. But just because everyone doesn't learn to walk on water doesn't mean the program is a failure. We have to appreciate this. It doesn't matter what level of society you are in, some people are maveric and they'll just stay that way.

Right now we seem to be developing a social face that says, "Let's get these people at a survival level and keep them at that minimal survival level." I don't think this should be the intention. To me, assistance is something that should be developed from a base from which life can further develop. But we shouldn't say, "Okay, because you are ready to develop, we are going to pull your carpet our from underneath you. I believe things have to work in a gradient form, and I am not seeing this happen. What I am seeing is, someone goes to a place such as Homes First, at which point everybody says, "Well, gee, he's got a job now." Big deal. He's got a job at McDonalds. That doesn't mean he can go out and get a three-bedroom apartment. It still means he needs some help along the way. Maybe two or three years, maybe it can be reduced, but I think we tend to leave with minimum absolute values too much.

Bosworth: Our policy has been that the market takes care of everybody except those who drop out of it. Then we put a minimal kind of safety net in place. I think we still have an opportunity in Canada to develop a different kind of social policy. The economics in Canada haven't yet got so far out of hand we couldn't develop some other social policy. On the cost side — and I think M. Gaudet has identified the reason we are into the current set of policies — it is a cost control mechanism. I think we could create a structure that responds to the need, the demand, and would also be cost-controlled if we were to look at not only the cost of paying mortgages but at the equity built up by buying something. Instead of subsidizing the accumulation of capital in the private sector, which is what all of our policies do now and almost without exception, we should start looking at accumulating those assets and that capital, not in the public sector but in the private non-profit sector. The capital then becomes a real community asset, which can be used by the community.

None of these ideas are particularly new. I just look at what business is doing. If you look at Cadillac Fairview, for example, they built housing when they could make money in it, and they are now in the shopping centre business. Communities could do the same thing. If they buy housing stock, when they have stabilized enough of it in a community and housing prices are maintained at a reasonable level, there is still the capital appreciation in the housing stock. This could be re-mortgaged, rents could still be kept at an affordable level, and the capital that comes out can go into community development. Now, if I was the president of Cadillac Fairview, a different audience would react differently to what I am saying. Because I am in the non-profit field and

suggesting that the public good could be served by some kind of strategy such as this, I will probably get called a communist. But it is the same strategy. It is just who ends up controlling that asset.

There is real opportunity here to deal with housing in a way that has never presented itself through any other kind of income transfer or income supplement program.

Gaudet: I believe that the acceptability of using different forms of shelter assistance for those at the lower-income end may help to de-stigmatize and create more acceptance. As we move closer to providing shelter assistance for the working poor, the acceptability level may raise.

REGULATORY REFORM AND HOUSING QUALITY

RÉFORME RÉGLEMENTAIRE ET QUALITÉ DES LOGEMENTS

Is regulatory reform the answer to the affordable housing crisis in Canada? Are municipal regulatory barriers major impediments to the creation of affordable housing? Now is the time for action on regulatory reform. In this session, panelists not only discuss the solutions proposed by the three groups involved in the CMHC-sponsored national regulatory reform study, but also explore the assumptions underlying CMHC's most recent consultation process on the quality of housing in Canada.

La réforme réglementaire est-elle la solution à la crise de l'abordabilité des logements au Canada? Les règlements municipaux constituent-ils des obstacles majeurs à la création de logements à prix abordable? C'est le moment d'agir sur la question de la réforme réglementaire. Dans cette séance, les participants et participantes discutent des solutions proposées par les trois groupes participant à l'étude nationale de réforme réglementaire parrainée par la SCHL. Ils examinent également les hypothèses qui sous-tendent le tout dernier processus de consultation de la SCHL sur la qualité du logement au Canada.

Charles D'Amour (Chair)
General Manager, Quebec Region
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Shannie Duff
Deputy-Mayor, City of St. John's, Newfoundland, and
Chair, Federation of Canadian Municipalities Housing Task Force

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The chair, Charles D'Amour, general manager of the Quebec region for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, opened the session by stating the issues being addressed by the three panelists: "Is regulatory reform the answer to the affordable housing crisis in Canada?"; and "Are municipal regulatory barriers major impediments to the creation of affordable housing?" When the tripartite group, which includes the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Canadian Home Builders' Association, and the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association, contacted CMHC to sponsor a proposal for regulatory reform, the corporation was very receptive, said D'Amour. The corporation believed, and continues to believe, that reforms will help the housing industry meet the following needs: the housing needs of a changing population that will include more senior citizens, single-parent families, and people living alone; the need to improve access to affordable housing, both in the private and public sectors; the possibility of developing new techniques; and the ability to meet the demand for better housing choices, particularly for frail or handicapped people who are looking for alternatives to traditional social-medical institutions.

In addition to this regulatory reform initiative, said D'Amour, CMHC is also engaged in examining the quality of housing to determine if it is adequate, lasting, and liveable.

"Regulatory reform and the improvement of housing quality are perceived as being incompatible because the presumption is that reforms will inevitably lead to lower standards. This is not the case. In fact, if we could improve cost-effectiveness by streamlining regulations, we could greatly improve the capacity to offer a better choice and quality of housing. Regulatory reform, however, must not compromise basic health and safety requirements," stressed D'Amour.

"We must strike a fair balance between the rights of existing owners and the need to find other forms of housing and to innovate. Many provinces and municipalities are taking major measures to review and make promising improvements to the regulatory environment."

D'Amour said that current hope is for the tripartite regulatory reform project to attain the following objectives: provide a means for sharing experiences and using them as a basis for improvement; promote co-operation among all levels of government, the industry, and consumers; and give the industry an opportunity to demonstrate the benefits that can result from regulatory reform.

"The issue of access to housing is inseparable from the issues of affordability and choice. Municipal politicians would prefer to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem."

Shannie Duff, the chair of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Task Force on Housing and deputy-mayor of the City of St. John's, Newfoundland, began her opening remarks by explaining the tripartite housing task force. Described as a task-oriented coalition representing the FCM, housing administrators, and home builders, the group has been working with the consultant group Energy Pathways Limited on the first phase of a project designed to increase affordability and choice in housing by stimulating municipal regulations and approval process reform.

In her presentation, Duff, also the chair of the St. John's non-profit housing organization and the city's planning and development committee and a member of the Newfoundland Assembly, conveyed FCM's views on this initiative.

Representing 490 provincial and territorial municipal organizations from across Canada ranging in size from 16 to more than two million people, the FCM collectively represents the municipal concerns of more than 70 per cent of the country's population, said Duff. "We have firsthand, frontline experience on the need for affordable and appropriate housing in our communities and support the concept of adequate housing as a basic human right and a prerequisite to addressing a multitude of other social problems related to quality of life."

"Although we do not have all the answers to these issues or the resources needed to address the housing issues in our communities, we are certainly willing to play our part in finding solutions. This is the underlying rational for FCM's participation in this program. The issue of access to housing is inseparable from the issues of affordability and choice, and municipal politicians would prefer to be part of the solution, rather than part of the problem."

When regulatory reform was initiated by CMHC as a pink paper three years ago, said Duff, the FCM referred it to its housing task force for review. The paper was initially greeted defensively and with scepticism. In particular, one of the paper's statements — regulatory reform can produce major cost savings without sacrificing essential health and safety needs or compromising local amenities, property values, or municipal tax bases — was considered unrealistic.

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After review and discussion, however, said Duff, FCM decided to join the coalition in order to explore the potential benefits of a regulatory reform program. The tripartite group was funded by CMHC to undertake the first phase of a program to stimulate reform of municipal regulations for increased affordability and choice in housing.

After three years, the initial phase was completed. The resulting discussion paper, which dealt with the program's objectives and design, identified existing initiatives in regulatory reform across Canada and the United States, selected those with general applicability potential, and set forth a program to initiate reform of regulations and approval processes that would be effective at the critical "local" level.

"Unfortunately," said Duff, "Phase I may end up as nothing more than an interesting academic exercise unless funding is made available to provide the support staff and resources for implementing the second and third phases of the program." These would include a nationwide education and consultation process; the initiation, monitoring, recording, and evaluation of between 20 and 40 regulatory and approval process reform demonstration projects in communities across Canada; and the communication of successful initiatives to communities and key players across the country. (According to Duff, the approach is loosely based on a similar initiative undertaken by HUD in the United States.)

Despite its support of the coalition, FCM believes that regulatory reform is only part of the solution to the problem of inadequate housing for Canadians. "Even members of the building industry will concede that many factors determine the cost of housing," said Duff, "not the least of which are market forces." Although the first phase indicates it does represent potential cost savings, Duff said that "regulatory reform cannot address demand and can only indirectly address supply."

She went on to say: "Through hard-won gains, regulatory reform can contribute to housing affordability through innovative design, higher densities, reduced engineering standards, and streamlined approval processes. Unfortunately, these gains can be negated by other federal policy initiatives, including federal tax reform, higher interest rates, and reduced federal support for housing programs."

The specific aspects of reform, Duff said, depend on one's perspective — exclusive zoning can either be viewed as a sacred trust or a sacred cow. "The citizens who elect us often view it as a sacred trust. It will require a major effort to convince local politicians, who pay the political price for tampering with municipal subdivision and land use regulations, that there is a need to increase affordability and choice in their communities. There will be real gains made from regulatory reform in the public interest, and these gains can be achieved without sacrificing the public interest in terms of health, safety, property values, and quality of life in neighbourhoods." For this reason, said Duff, the program places great emphasis on education, communication, and consultation.

Canadian municipalities are amenable to reviewing municipal code regulations and approval processes in order to keep them relevant to economic realities, new technology, and demographic trends, said Duff. "While we recognize there is a need to identify and communicate important new initiatives to increase affordability and choice, we feel that the case for municipal regulations as a major barrier to affordability is overstated and that a better case can be made for municipal regulations as barriers to choice."

According to Duff, FCM supports the design of the regulatory reform program for the second and third phases, believing real gains can be realized in bringing together municipal officials, members of the building industry, and local housing administrators with national and provincial regulatory reform task force support. "Too often, these three groups are cast in adversarial roles. Myths and misunderstandings prevalent on all sides impede the overall goal of increasing the choice of and affordability in housing. The co-operative involvement of the tripartite group in the process of regulatory reform should result in a better product. Increased municipal understanding should result in a smoother, less adversarial, and more effective process."

FCM has an important role to play in developing models for a streamlined approval process, said Duff. The demonstration projects, especially those involving atypical housing forms, will require municipalities to re-examine the way they process applications. "They will show us where our strengths and weaknesses lie and will precipitate a review of how we currently do things and how these things can be improved. We must remember, however, that our goal is to increase housing affordability and choice while, at the same time, to manage the development of our communities in light of public safety."

In terms of housing quality, said Duff, FCM believes the bricks and mortar state of housing technology has advanced to the point where the focus can and must shift to housing in an environmental context. "CMHC has defined housing quality not only around the issues of adequacy, durability, and suitability but also around the issue of residential densities, neighbourhood quality, land development approvals, and urban infrastructure. These are issues municipalities face every day, and some of these will be addressed through the regulatory reform program."

FCM has tried to convince the federal government it should share the burden of bringing Canada's infrastructure up to standard, said Duff. "Despite the withdrawal of CMHC support for community planning after the 1960s and the termination of assistance plans for municipalities in the area of sewage collection, disposal facilities, and water treatment and distribution systems, the federal and provincial governments cannot be absolved from their responsibility for ensuring that Canadians have access to a clean and safe environment and that the systems necessary to support national growth and well-being are functioning smoothly."

Housing quality and the quality of urban life, said Duff, depends on many factors. Community problems, such as drugs, vandalism, and crime, are multiplied in social housing developments as a result of the social and economic conditions of the people living there. "These problems are not easy to deal with and are part of the reason why there is a community backlash in response to social housing projects. FCM, with a number of partners, is ensuring that municipalities are made aware of these problems and of possible solutions. Although the problems in Canadian housing projects are not as grave as in some American inner cities, housing and government officials must be aware of the growing concern for urban safety and crime prevention and, therefore, must participate in an intersectoral approach to addressing these concerns."

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"As an issue of national importance," said Tom Cochren, the president of the Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA), "regulatory reform is something we can work on

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together. We can use a program of reform to build on our achievements, and in the area of housing, Canada has a great deal to be proud of. As a society, we have a history of producing excellent housing in every respect. Today, there is clearly a link between quality products and quality communities, which speaks well not only for home builders but also for the municipalities in which they work."

"Several years ago, various members of the housing production industry identified the need to understand one another better and to seek opportunities to work together. Since then, relations among our associations have grown stronger. As the producers of market housing, CHBA can identify with those who have taken up the serious and essential task of producing housing for the truly needy."

Cochren spoke strongly for the continued and increased financial support of governments in the private market production of social housing and their commitment to ensuring all Canadians have the opportunity to enjoy adequate housing.

The producers of social housing have acknowledged the importance of the private sector and the market mechanism in the production of housing for most Canadians, said Cochren. "Together we have achieved a pragmatic response to the expectation that Canadians have a right to reasonable housing — we have found the firm, middle-ground between those who place ideology ahead of the task of producing housing for Canadians."

The current system, however, said Cochren, is being seriously challenged, and it is apparent a regulatory environment is necessary. "We are not arguing for deregulation," he told the audience, "but for regulatory reform, as well as for greater attention to the overall tax environment in which the housing industry must operate."

The challenges of the regulatory environment, said Cochren, apply to both social and market housing. "Together we are seeking changes in building and land use regulations that reflect current household composition, size, and lifestyle trends and provide for flexibility, adaptation to change, and increased density."

Together, said Cochren, the groups are also seeking change to approval procedures. "It has long been acknowledged that procedures can frequently cause unnecessary delays. But we must also find ways to make public participation more meaningful without making it cumbersome."

Changes in building and land development regulations are also necessary to ensure that proven, cost-saving methods in land development, site planning, and building techniques are implemented. While consistency from one municipality to the next would lower costs, said Cochren, there must be enough flexibility in the system to allow for creative solutions to specific land and building problems.

Recognizing that regulatory costs are passed on to consumers is critical, said Cochren. This has serious consequences for those who may be unable to find adequate housing, for renting or buying, at a price they can afford. "Every regulation carries a cost to the consumer. The producers of social housing are constantly challenged by government to make more cost-effective use of the finite resources available. Yet, in the same way as those who are producing market housing, they are faced with an increasingly expensive regulatory environment. As pressure increases for both sectors, product and community quality may unfortunately be compromised."

Although these issues might be more evident in Canada's "hot" markets, they carry broad consequences for housing across

the country, said Cochren. "The increasingly ad hoc, highly discriminatory tax environment within which the building industry operates only aggravates the problems we face together."

A commitment to regulatory reform should not be used as a vehicle for compensating bad public policy, warned Cochren, but as a tool for improving both the quality of housing and the quality of communities. "There are, however, clear links between what we can achieve in this regard and the commitment of other levels of government to issues such as the provision of municipal infrastructure." Although this is particularly evident in Toronto and Vancouver, where the shortage of serviced land has posed a severe threat to affordability and good community planning, said Cochren, it can be expected to surface in other Canadian markets.

"Regulatory reform should be a progressive step forward for all of us, not a regressive vehicle for compromise. We should be trying to do the right thing, rather than accommodating conflicting forces. Regulatory reform should not be viewed as the necessary outcome of an unjustifiable tax environment, or other bad public policies. These issues must be put aside. In our attempt to do the right thing, I hope that we will also clarify the need for and encourage other types of change."

By working together, Cochren believes that builders, municipalities, and others operating at the grassroots level will become a collective force for change. "There are no magic solutions to the problems we face today. The changes we seek can only come about through our efforts at the local level."

Charlie House, in Hamilton, Ontario, is one of the demonstration projects under the regulatory reform initiative. Ironically, despite the public interest generated by the project and the interest expressed by prospective area homeowners, the city's planning regulations prevent the construction of this type of house in any municipal subdivision. "Perhaps the success of the project will convince city council to change its planning policies," said Cochren. "Let us hope that Charlie House comes to be viewed as the inspiration for a grassroots revolution that will eventually encompass all of Canada."

According to Cochren, CHBA's commitment to regulatory reform, in part, reflects the changes taking place in Canadian housing markets. New housing demand is declining. Demographic factors and immigration policies suggest the industry can expect a decline from the present 206,000 annual starts to only 180,000 for the balance of the next decade. "As a result," said Cochren, "competition will increase and builders will be searching for new, competitive advantages. If the obstacles of the regulatory environment can be removed to encourage improvement and quality, Canadians will reap enormous benefits."

Other factors played a role in the industry's decision to support regulatory reform. "Today's consumers are highly educated and are well aware of what they want in their housing and their communities. The industry will have to respond to these demands, which will promote and ensure quality of product and community within the industry."

Increasing market segmentation is another factor. "Quality must include value, performance of the built form, customer service, and the suitability of homes and communities for their intended markets," said Cochren. Two other trends that point to the need for regulatory reform are the increasing number of submarkets and the demand for renovation and adaptation of existing stock.

"There are no magic solutions to the problems we face today [in terms of housing quality and affordability]. The changes we seek can only come about through our efforts at the local level."

"In short," Cochren told the audience, "the industry can be expected in the future to compete even more on the basis of reputation, quality, and value. If we can unleash this competitive drive toward increased quality and value through regulatory reform, the country as a whole will benefit."

The same principles will also apply to social housing. With increased competition and a positive regulatory environment, said Cochren, Canadian builders will show more interest in construction systems, products, and management approaches offering increased housing quality and improved value. Accordingly, CHBA is placing priority on technology development, industry training and education, and consumer education.

"The producers of both market and social housing," said Cochren in conclusion, "are at the centre of an exceedingly complex industry. We must be the leaders of change. We must ensure that regulatory reform becomes a vehicle for positive change and not an instrument for compromising quality. The tripartite initiative is our most effective means of capturing the expertise, resources, and commitment of our associations at the grassroots level."

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"The real question we have to face as a tripartite coalition of very different interest groups is whether or not we can bring our interests to coincide with each other and to bear on the problems of regulatory reform, affordability, and housing quality," said Richard Peddie, general manager of land development for the City of Toronto's housing department. "I must confess, I am a bit pessimistic about it."

Peddie believes consensus can be reached on regulatory reform, but the concerns of the three groups differ greatly when it comes to the issues of affordability and housing quality. In a way, he said, the regulatory reform issue is a "smokescreen." In another way, it is an issue of legitimate focus. "All of us involved in the production of housing, whether we work for municipalities or private-sector developers, have to face what is sometimes a nightmare of process regulation, obsolete notions of the norm, and barriers to real innovation, whether through the land development process or in bringing cost-effective materials to bear on our construction processes."

The coalition is particularly concerned with the planning process. While it is true that in some municipalities it can take more than four years to process what appears to be a very simple development, there is a reason for this apparent lethargy. "In Ontario, in particular," said Peddie, "we are dealing with a very democratic planning process in which public participation and consultation is built into the planning act itself. While we must not allow it to hold up reasonable developments, this is a right that must be protected. The upholding of this right is fundamental to any examination of the regulatory reform process in terms of the planning and project approval system."

Peddie believes the system can be improved. "Indeed, many municipalities across this country have taken measures to improve the process not only with regard to planning applications but also with building applications through the 'fast-tracking' process." In addition, said Peddie, the Ontario government has become interventionist where the barriers to processing social housing developments are class- or financially-oriented.

"Within the established rules and regulations, we have to be interventionist to ensure that undue delays do not occur in the

planning and project approval processes," said Peddie. "But we must remember, for important democratic reasons, there is something to protect, as well as something to streamline."

As the provinces begin to embrace environmental assessment acts and as environmental concerns begin to be addressed through the planning process, Peddie believes the processes will be lengthened rather than streamlined. This is already happening with the implementation of the Environmental Assessment Act and various other environmental controls in Ontario. "We would be hard-pressed to argue we should not have these controls in place, particularly in the social housing field and increasingly in the private housing field, as we develop and re-develop infill sites and re-zone industrial areas and previous landfill sites. It is in the public interest."

In terms of obsolete standards and regulations, said Peddie, the important thing to remember is they have to move with the norms of society, being cognisant of technological change, as well as regional geography. "Although standards applicable in the centre of Toronto are clearly not applicable in the Northwest Territories, we continue to try mistakenly to apply national sets of regulations and standards."

The third category the task force is legitimately tackling, said Peddie — the barriers to innovation — is a difficult one with which to deal. "Governments are, by definition, conservative creatures, and we all face long delays in testing and certification procedures when we are trying to be cost-effective."

At one level, said Peddie, the task force has a very important job ahead of it: to continually review and educate; to break down the barriers to innovation; to get rid of obsolete regulations; and to generally work hard at the planning and regulatory processes. With regard to the second component of the discussion, however — affordability — links that may appear to be obvious are actually rather tenuous. If we can cut down the production costs, the factor costs, and the input costs, said Peddie, it should have a bearing on the cost of the product or the price the renter or homeowner must pay (assuming that profit margins don't increase in the meantime).

Peddie believes, however, that factor costs are only a fraction of the overall cost, and this is symptomatic of the real problem. "To deal with the relationship between housing production, housing quality, and affordability, you have to look at the fundamentals of why housing costs so much in Canada; you have to look at the macro system." Peddie indicated that geography (the friction of distance; the cost of shipping materials; the distance-related lack of skilled labour in many parts of the country), which has nothing to do with the regulatory environment, is one of the main factors generating high Canadian housing prices.

Hand in hand with our promotion of unparalleled economic growth, said Peddie, come the associated costs suffered by the industry in, for example, Ontario's Golden Horseshoe: upward pressure on land prices, building materials, labour costs, etc. "Regardless of the regulatory environment, if you are driving your engine by economic goals, you are going to have to pay the price."

Discrimination as it affects affordability is another issue, Peddie said. Withholding accommodation from ethnic groups, single-parent families, or families with children puts cost pressures on them. The continuing problem of poverty is another aspect of the affordability question that must be considered.

"Poverty is the central problem we deal with," said Peddie, "and the focus on regulatory reform, the cost of housing, and

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Question and Answer Period

Q: In one of the municipalities outside Ottawa where I work, it can now cost up to $14,000 for various levels of government taking municipal development charges for a stacked townhouse unit carrying a maximum unit price of about $85,000. This is a fairly substantial chunk, and certainly more than the land value. This affects the viability of doing a project and the quality of the project down the line. I wonder if the panelists have any comments on life-cycle costing as another approach to quality.

Duff: The situation differs from municipality to municipality, and my personal experience may be different from the City of Ottawa's. When you talk about development levies, are you referring to the cost levied by the municipality for servicing the lot or the cost of putting it through the approval process?

Q: I am referring to the municipality charge on a per unit basis, which is applied theoretically toward providing municipal services to the property. However, it generally goes into general revenues. I am going to throw out the notion, for the sake of argument, that municipal development charges are wrong because the maximum unit prices don't recognize them and the municipality should be making that contribution of their services with no cost.

Duff: Our municipality requires the developer of a subdivision to put in the services at his cost. There is no direct municipal levy in that sense. It is then included in the price of a lot, which is paid for by the consumer, so it certainly does add to the price of housing. But if the services affordability takes our attention away from this issue." Over the last few censuses, he said, there has been little movement in the distribution of wealth in this country. If anything, the position of the lower two or three quintiles is getting worse. Regulations aside, a thorough examination of the tax system, both from the builder's and the taxpayer's point of view, has to be undertaken in order to deal effectively with the affordability problem.

"So we have to accept the fact of our geographical circumstances; we have to look at the kind of economy we have been building and its concentration; and we need federal/provincial action to deal directly with not only the tax system (in particular, the trend to 'passing-down' the tax burden) but also the social security and transfer payments systems."

Moving on to the peculiar relationship between housing quality and regulatory reform, Peddie pointed out some obvious relationships concerning regulatory cutbacks in housing. It is the municipalities that have to live with poor quality construction and minimum standards, he said, and they have the municipal council that sits at the end of the line.

Referring to a document produced by CMHC (*A Consultation Paper on Housing Quality*) as "a fundamental paper on the federal position in regard to housing and community development quality," Peddie quoted the following:

> Housing quality includes the protection of health and safety, durability, suitability, neighbourhood, and local services.

"In other words," said Peddie, "housing quality includes everything." While CMHC made a "phenomenal contribution" to housing and community quality in Canada from 1946 to 1978, admits Peddie, the organization has been withdrawing from that fundamental role ever since. Peddie said that a major concern of all three groups represented by the coalition should be the deterioration of our municipal infrastructure. "We have been watching with concern and alarm what has been happening in the United States where high-level government funding for basic infrastructure has followed the pattern of complete withdrawal. We appear to be following this pattern."

According to Peddie, this gives rise to several concerns. "If we take regulatory reform too seriously, we start to build into our housing system rapid obsolescence and decay."

Also, "in relationship to affordability, regulatory reform, and government policy, the broad-based housing quality issue is an incredibly important one." CMHC's document, said Peddie, fails to recognize it is the federal government's responsibility to ensure national standards and the quality of communities across the country.

Indeed, said Peddie, CMHC funded most of the country's infrastructure and encouraged a high standard of living. "It is clear now that, given the transfer of both the tax burden and the responsibility of housing quality to the provincial governments and the limited taxing basis of the municipal governments, the federal purse must again be spent."

"It is not a question of deficits and a lack of money; it is a question of priorities. The money is there. But federal spending is simply channelling it into other areas."

Although it does not bear a direct relationship to the topic at hand, said Peddie, the CMHC document is important in terms of illustrating where expenditures should lie. "Expenditures in the social housing field should not rest with the municipalities; nor

should all the burden be transferred to the building industry. When it comes to general housing quality and the quality of neighbourhoods, there must clearly be a federal expenditure and a federal guiding role."

"In summary," said Peddie, "while it is imperative that we link the three very important issues of regulatory reform, affordability, and housing quality, we must not allow the tripartite coalition, under its critical mandate, to obscure the real issues surrounding affordability and the quality of our communities."

are put in at the cost to the municipality, it would be beyond the capability of many municipalities to afford it. It may be okay in the larger Ontario municipalities, but the municipal tax base, being regressive and limited as it is, particularly when communities have not got a lot of extra dollars, would be a virtual impossibility and would simply drive up municipal taxes.

Peddie: Your question is, who should pay for local community services? The burden of paying for those services now rests with the municipalities. If CMHC sets an inappropriate cost limit on its socially funded programs, it is unfair on the part of the development industry to beat up on the municipalities without reason. If the MUPs (maximum unit prices) are inappropriate to a particular locality, the development industry should be talking to CMHC, just as the municipalities do. In the City of Toronto, the average maximum unit price for a two-bedroom high-rise unit is about $132,000.

The fundamental question is, how does the financing of infrastructure and communities work on a provincial and national basis? My argument is that, if we want to maintain the momentum we created in the '50s, '60s, and early '70s in financing infrastructure and high-quality community development, the federal government has a very important role to play. One way is to adjust the price structure for social housing programs. But that is such a small part of the game. Social housing constitutes about four per cent of the housing starts across the country. You should be negotiating with the federal government, as well as with us, when it comes to development levies. Development levies get passed on to the consumer.

Cochren: The home building industry is taking two approaches to the affordability of housing. One of them is regulatory reform as, in the long term, we see this as the source of solutions to some of the costs. If you look at four years to bring land onstream, then 10, 12, 14 weeks to get a building permit and six to eight weeks to build a house doesn't seem horrendous, does it? And where is the cost?

The other area, of course, is tax reform at all levels. Peddie suggested we were concerned about rising costs because of sales and land transfer taxes. But one of the other areas is development charges, capital charges, and the discriminatory impact on the new home purchaser, or the providers of social housing or other rental housing in Canada and particularly in Ontario, which seems to be burdened unduly by rampant indiscriminant charges in that area.

Our industry is willing to pay our fair share of the tax burden with the cost of development. Lot levies were traditionally used to fund hard costs of services downstream: sewage treatment, trunks, arterial roads. On top of this, the developer is also required to pay the actual costs of servicing the land. What seems to have happened is the municipalities — who have been short-changed by the provinces and the federal government in terms of transfer payments — are looking for sources of funding to make up the shortfalls burdening them. They have gone beyond the traditional hard-cost servicing purpose for lot levies. They have used them to fund soft, soft services; libraries, arenas, police and fire stations, park development, etc. That's fine, but does the purchaser or the renter of the unit that you are trying to provide within the range or the limits of a MUP really understand he has to pay for that, whereas nobody else in the community traditionally did?

We are willing to pay our fair share, but we think we should only go to the traditional forms and uses of those charges for development and acts.

However, now we are faced with the Development Charges Act, which will probably only add about another $5,000 to the cost of every lot.

So we have to sit down and examine the true cost of growth; we have to determine who really should pay for the cost of infrastructure. To do so, we have to start being honest with one another and take a look at some of these real costs that we face.

Q: In the City of Vancouver, we are about to introduce development charges, probably in order to help pay for things such as social housing programs or a portion of the land costs for social housing if we choose to buy them elsewhere. Thus, we are in the process of negotiating a good portion of the land or the site or the units for affordable housing projects. Bonusing is a technique we do quite well: We give the developer extra FSR in exchange for some benefit to the community. Historically, I think the value of the bonus or the gift received from the developer was quite a small fraction of the value of the additional FSR he or she was permitted to build. I was wondering whether the end result of bonusing, in fact, contributes to or detracts from the cost of housing or any project?

Cochren: Municipalities with the right to bonus lands, or at the same time with the right to blackmail other developers, have within their power the ability to create tremendous amounts of wealth. If municipalities want to bonus land, thereby creating added value in return for getting something back, and if this action doesn't impinge on the quality of life, then who might argue with it? It is part of that approval process the community should be involved in that has very important implications for quality of housing, as well as the cost of housing. It might not just be residential; it could be commercial. I guess it is the same thing as having a 40-foot height restriction in reverse. It is the opposite of a penalty.

Peddie: As one of the most successful blackmailers in the development field in Canada, I can speak with some authority on this matter. The fundamental question is, should the private sector, which benefits from public-sector investment decisions, be required to share the windfall profits from those public-sector decisions. In the City of Toronto, which is very successful in linking increased density for commercial, and some residential, developments, I think the answer is unequivocably "yes."

Phenomenal windfall profits can be made from something as simple as a one-time coverage increase in a commercial office building. Those of you who read *The Globe and Mail* will probably have followed a major discussion on something called The Bay/Adelaide Redevelopment in downtown Toronto, in which my department received the Sears Warehouse, which cost $35 million to the developer — a million square feet of downtown space — for a dollar to us as part of the deal. Clearly indicative is how much the windfall profit to the developer was that he could afford to do this. Municipalities are getting increasingly sophisticated in putting a dollar amount to such things.

The rule of thumb we have been using is that we would like to take 50 per cent of the anticipated profitability of the increased density to be directed into social benefits, which include, as a top priority, housing, but also parks, daycare centres, linkages to the subway system, and so on. We are now living in the '90s, and the year 2000 is coming fast. We have a different notion of community where we do expect more than streetlights and sewers in our communities when we build them. So there is an open question, how do they get paid for? In some cases, it is quite legitimate to charge development levies to pay for public infrastructure decisions.

Duff: Those cities in a position to be able to have a win/win blackmailing situation are very lucky because the bonusing issue only really works in hot markets. If you have not a hot market, it is not the way to be able to raise money for social purposes, no matter how good, on your development industry.

Q: I call bonusing "the raping of our cities." And I hope that CMHC, in their reform consultation, also consult with some of the citizens in the cities. If we are talking about social housing and where we get the money to build liveable social housing, we shouldn't depend on the private sector and say, "Well, you give us X number of dollars and we will put that into social housing." That is passing the buck from where it should be -- at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels.

What are our priorities? I come under a 15.1 program, a variable liveable program both for the city and the tenants who live there. When you increase the density, whether it be commercial, industrial, or residential, you have to look at the support services required. I am also a community worker, and our services, not the people, have gone up a thousandfold in providing backup services.

My question is, why bonuses? It is a form of copping out as far as I am concerned.

Peddie: I agree, but we live in the real world, and we live in a mixed society. In the social housing field, we have to make progress as we can. We shouldn't have to make one-of-a-kind deals to deal with a fundamental public good.

CAN THE PRIVATE SECTOR DO IT?

LE RÔLE DU SECTEUR PRIVÉ

There is a widespread belief in Canada that the private sector has been and should continue to be the principal producer of housing. The private sector can respond effectively to the housing needs in Canada, but too much government interference, regulation, and control is preventing the functioning of the market.

Au Canada, on est d'opinion que le secteur privé a toujours été et devrait continuer d'être le principal producteur de logements. Le secteur privé est en mesure de répondre de manière efficace aux besoins en logement du Canada, mais trop d'ingérence, de réglementation et de contrôle de la part des gouvernements nuisent aux rouages du marché.

Richard Carrier (Chair)
Consultant to the President, Credit and Finance
Confederation des caisses populaires
Levis, Québec

Hugh Heron
President, Heron Homes
Scarborough, Ontario

Louis Cayer
Vice-President
Royal LePage, Quebec Region

Alido Di Iorio
President
Ontario Home Builders' Association

Andre Charbonneau
President
Quebec Home Builders' Association

For those involved in the housing industry, the most delicate role is to reconcile customers' individual preferences with the requirements of planning and the quality of the environment. This process, said Richard Carrier, the chair of the session, involves bringing together many different interests, both individual and collective. Collective interests are expressed by government regulation and control. As efficiency in the housing industry depends on a delicate, dynamic balance among these different elements, it is appropriate to question regulation itself. Is it adequate? Is it functional? Is it a useless burden for those involved? How can we alleviate this burden? These, and other, questions, are being addressed by today's panelists, said Carrier, before introducing the first speaker.

"If you work in the private sector, especially as an entrepreneur or for an entrepreneur, you already know the answer to the question, Can the private sector do it?" The obvious answer, remarked Hugh Heron in his opening statement, is yes.

"The private-sector homebuilding industry is the best hope for housing," said the president of Heron Homes near Toronto,

because of the private-sector's ability "to get the job done."

Given that the private sector realizes there isn't enough affordable housing available, Heron then posed the question, "What conditions will make it possible for us to provide more affordable housing than we are building now?"

"We're building too much for the top 10 per cent of the market," he said. "And we've left behind the other 90 per cent of the new home market: rental housing and social housing."

Heron then went on to suggest how all interest groups can take part in setting the housing policy agenda, beginning with the establishment of a housing policy development group in every province.

Such a group will "put everyone on the same turf, with no choice but to find solutions."

Heron went on to explain the necessity of a provincial housing policy development group, where the provincial government authority is central to housing. "The provinces control most of the taxation that affects housing — most housing-related legislation, such as rent, co-op housing, and condominiums — and the kinds of taxes and conditions municipalities can set that affect housing. They determine spending levels on infrastructure and what trade unions can do."

According to Heron, vast amounts of land already owned by provincial governments could be used to house Canadians.

Conceding that the different interest groups don't have a strong enough motive to find solutions together, Heron emphasized that provincial government leaders "can provide that strong motive to work together." Each provincial premier should announce first that a housing policy development group, which should include all the major interest groups having a legitimate interest in the supply of housing, will be convened. Each group, he said, should have a limited time to select its own representatives and must devise positions on which its members can agree. It must also be assigned three tasks: to define the housing problem with all its various tentacles; to examine the full range of government programs now in existence, keeping only the ones that work and throwing out the proven failures; and to find solutions to the problems as they have been defined.

But, Heron said, the provincial premiers must, when such a group has been formed, make two points clear. They must stress that, if all groups can agree on a common solution, it will form part of the housing policy. They must also be prepared to impose solutions if solutions are not found.

Four elements are necessary to making such a housing policy development group work: courage, leadership, a commitment to contribute, and a willingness to listen. Said Heron, "There must be both political courage and leadership from the provincial premier who convenes the group. And there must be a commitment to contribute, and a willingness to listen, from the groups participating, as well as from governments."

Heron then elaborated on each of the four points, starting with courage. The premiers must publicly admit the need for partnership. "They need courage to admit they can't find the best solutions without listening," said Heron. He told the delegates that the latest affordable housing policy dictating one-quarter of all new homes must be affordable to people in the 60th percentile of income is a clear example of "what happens when governments don't listen and go their own way." The policy, he said, is clearly one that has been imposed on all of Ontario to address a purely local, Toronto-area problem.

"The private-sector homebuilding industry is the best hope for housing because of its ability to get the job done."

"We need political courage from our leaders, who must be willing to admit that a housing policy can't ignore the people who have a stake in producing houses."

"It's time to end the turf wars, time to stop selling one-sided miracle cures."

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Leadership is also a prime ingredient when convening a housing policy development group. Although it needs the help of all sectors in housing, the government can't abdicate its own responsibility, said Heron. "The government sets policy. It calls the shots. So the provincial government must be in control of a housing policy development group. But it will only stay in control if it stays above the turf wars, resisting the temptation to pit one group against the other."

Heron continued, "Politicians must show leadership by resisting the opportunity to score easy points in the media. They will have to stop reacting immediately to bad news coverage, promising to correct every situation with a quick fix." These quick fixes usually, he said, only drive up the cost of a new home.

The outcome of this scenerio is that often the public blames the building industry for the higher price, not having given much thought to the consequences of the government regulations. Heron said, "Without thinking about how a builder finances home construction, the public sees builders as the people who bear watching — and who just raised their prices again."

According to Heron, the opposite is probably closer to the truth.

Commitment to realism is also an important element for a housing policy development group. "You may be experts in one part of housing, but others have a legitimate contribution to make, too: advocates and producers of social and co-op housing, labour representatives and urban planners, municipal officials and lending insitutions, spokespersons for the homeless, ratepayers, and provincial government ministries and agencies," he said.

"I believe more can be done if we know more about each other, listen to each other's opinions, and take notice of the inescapable facts all of us have at our command. We need everyone working together, listening to one another's concerns, proposing new approaches from different perspectives," Heron said. At the moment, "we've become too used to fighting each other for turf, or for public money, or for political ideologies, or sometimes just for attention."

Having made the point that no one individual knows everything about housing, Heron reminded the delegates that many groups are expert in some part of the housing crisis. He said, "We must pool those human resources, [or we will not] have any hope of finding realistic, workable solutions."

The fourth element necessary to an effective housing policy development group is the willingness to listen. Spokepersons from each interest group who truly represent what they claim to represent are what is needed to get the job done, said Heron. In conclusion, he said, the process to real consultation could begin now. "It's time to end the turf wars, time to stop selling one-sided miracle cures." Heron called on delegates to establish a housing policy development group in one province, which could serve as a model for the rest of the country.

For his presentation, Louis Cayer, vice-president of Royal LePage for the region of Quebec, talked about Canadians' dreams of becoming homeowners: "Everybody wants to own a piece of land, a little house."

In recognition of this fact, the media continues to run columns or programs on housing, and every Thursday, when the Bank of Canada increases its interest rate, radio and television stations and newspapers announce the new rate. When statistics are published by housing associations and corporations such as Royal LePage and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the media use these items as fodder for their news.

This interest in housing by the media, said Cayer, shows the importance of housing in the lives of Canadians. "Everybody wants to own a house, but can they afford it? And at what cost? How can we buy our first house? Is this the right time to buy? Are prices too high? Will interest rates drop? These are all questions that first-time homebuyers always ask."

If buyers have the required downpayment and can reimburse a mortgage loan, it is unwise to delay the decision to buy in the hope that prices or interest rates will drop.

Having introduced the subject of homeownership to the delegates, Cayer turned to a detailed explanation of house prices, mortgage rates, and downpayments. Since 1956, he said, the average price of a house dropped only four times: in 1960, 1961, 1982, and 1984. It increased in 1973 and 1974, at 21.5 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively, because the Dow Jones dropped to nearly 400 points. The same thing happened in 1981. In 1982, mortgage rates increased to 21 per cent, and on October 19, 1987, prices increased.

There are consequences if one delays the decision to buy because of high interest rates, said Cayer. To demonstrate, he first gave the following scenerio: As of December 31, 1988, the average price of a house was $109,000, the 25 per cent downpayment was $27,259, the conventional mortgage was $81,750, the mortgage rate was 12.5 per cent, and the mortgage payment was $10,477. If a projection was made to one year later — as of December 31, 1989 — and if the interest rate dropped by one percentage point to 11.5 per cent and the average price of a house was $115,000, the difference would be $6,000. Thus, the buyer would save $147, said Cayer, who then pointed out that his calculations do not include the rent one would have to continue paying for an extra year.

Who can afford this amount of money?, Cayer asked.

He then provided another example for consideration: an $110,000 house with a 25 per cent downpayment. The average cost to reimburse an $82,500 mortgage is $1,100 per month. To be able to afford such a purchase, the family income has to be $3,600 per month or $43,400 per year. "This annual income of $43,400 is quite high for someone just starting out in the labour force, but it is not rare for a couple to earn that amount, and even much more." Cayer added that one needn't rely on the average price of a house to determine whether one can afford to buy a house.

Buyers, he said, can still buy a house below the average price. In Quebec, for instance, the average price of a house is under $100,000.

"Many solutions are available for first-time homebuyers. Do not buy your last house first. Start with a smaller house that might not be well located. When the value of the property has increased, as well as the family income, sell and buy a house that corresponds more to your taste. Buy a house that you can renovate if you have the time and the money. Try also to benefit from rehabilitation programs that are sometimes offered in certain municipalities, as well as from government homeownership programs, such as those currently offered in Quebec," he said in conclusion.

"Many solutions are available for first-time homebuyers. Do not buy your last house first. Start with a smaller house that might not be well located. When the value of the property has increased, as well as the family income, sell and buy a house that corresponds more to your taste."

"The work of social housing advocates helped ensure that our political decision-makers are aware of their fundamental responsibility to provide the needed resources and commitment in the creation of housing."

Members of the Ontario Home Builders' Association, who are all entrepreneurs, share the belief that it has been and remains the private-sector's challenge to provide housing to meet the needs of the people of Canada. But this does not mean, said Alido Di Iorio, the association's president, that providers of non-profit housing are not a key component in meeting the total housing needs of Canadians.

Social housing advocates provide a vital bridge between the private-sector producers of housing and social responsibility, which we, as a country, have toward those without adequate housing.

"Your participation during the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless was a legacy to the excellent work you've done, and continue to do," he remarked. "Your work helped ensure that our political decision-makers are aware of their fundamental responsibility to provide the needed resources and commitment in the creation of housing."

This, said Di Iorio, has been the goal of the private sector.

In particular, the Ontario Home Builders' Association has called on the Ontario government to set a realistic agenda for that province's future housing needs — an overall housing and growth policy that will tell both the producers of housing and consumers where the government's priorities are. "We've called for such a policy," said Di Iorio, "because the people of Ontario, including the private-sector residential industry, need to define our role in the context of providing housing. We need to be able to say, 'Yes, we can build the needed housing units if there are sewers and road systems to accommodate it.' We need to be able to acknowledge that a certain percentage of the population cannot, for whatever reasons, afford adequate housing."

"Therefore, we must develop and implement a system that can efficiently produce affordable, targeted accommodation."

Di Iorio also emphasized the need to be able to respond to municipalities who have been unwilling to allow a wide variety and mix of housing tenures in their communities, mixes that characterize vibrant and diverse neighbourhoods.

However, reality is that the housing situation is deteriorating daily. In fact, said Di Iorio, "We are facing a housing crisis of seemingly unmanageable proportions."

Exacerbating the problem are the following factors:

- Net migration to Ontario exceeded 110,000 people in 1987, with 94,000 more people arriving in Ontario in 1988 and a further 80,000 in 1989. Most migrants to Ontario head for Toronto, where one-quarter of Canada's total population growth between 1985 and 1987 was in the Greater Toronto area; and

- Because Ontario's economy entered its seventh consecutive year of growth in 1988, the booming economy has attracted more and more people — all needing a place to live.

"Quite clearly, the supply of housing has not kept pace with the demand."

Coupled with the province's population explosion and economic growth has been increasing incidences of a 'social' nature. Di Iorio pointed out that the incidence of violence against women and children has increased dramatically. In addition, "we're

witnessing a polarization of the classes in Toronto where many believe that only the well-off and the poor can live. The middle class has been squeezed out of the traditional city into the suburbs and satellite communities far removed from places of employment."

The classic scenario of run-down buildings neglected by their owners — "abandoned to the ravages of urban decay, nothing more than shells and skeletons of their former structures" — is slowly materializing in the fabric of Toronto's neighbourhoods, said Di Iorio.

While the homebuilding industry has worked feverishly to build new homes, constraints have prevented it from meeting the total need. Speaking from an Ontario perspective, Di Iorio said the province must accept a great deal of the responsibility for the current situation. "This," he stressed, "accurately reflects the state of affairs in Ontario." Rent controls have led to a significant decrease in the private-sector's participation in constructing rental units and created a myriad of complicated, cumbersome regulations; vacancy rates in Toronto are the lowest in the country; and the regulatory and lands approval process is strangling the private-sector's ability to bring residential land on stream at a pace where supply can keep up with demand — "let alone create the necessary climate where supply exceeds demand."

"Right now," said Di Iorio, "it takes between seven and nine years to bring raw, agricultural land to the point where we can build a housing unit. The number of commenting agencies and authorities is so redundant that one has to wonder how anything gets built at all."

Although Di Iorio conceded that necessary approvals are necessary to protect the public interest, he said that what is "unacceptable" to the industry is that demands have not been met with increased staff and innovative thinking to deal with the volume of applications or the magnitude of the crisis.

"The government acknowledges the inefficiencies but, as yet, has not been able to ensure that the many different constituent ministries all consider housing as a priority and that their policies are not counterproductive to that priority."

The use of lot levies has been considered a means of paying for all types of infrastructure. Although, for the most part, "builders have not argued with paying their fair share of growth-related hard costs," Di Iorio said, "the whole question of infrastructure funding, so vital to our ability to provide housing, needs to be addressed."

To solve Canada's housing affordability crisis, Di Iorio called on all the collective efforts of all the housing players. "It's not enough for me to stand up in front of an audience and demand that the Ontario government come up with an overall housing policy," he said. "It's not enough that social housing proponents tell us co-operative and non-profit housing is the only way of ensuring that people are properly housed, not subject to the vagaries and greed of the 'free market'."

"There has got to be a social and political will to meet the housing needs of *all* Canadians. It is fundamental for both private- and public-sector producers of housing to integrate housing as a basic component of economic and social planning."

Di Iorio ended with the statement: "Can the private sector do it? Yes, I believe we can — but providing housing must be a community effort."

As president of the Quebec Provincial Home Builders' Association (APCHQ), André Charbonneau talked about the private-sector's place in the development of an affordable

"The government acknowledges the inefficiencies but, as yet, has not been able to ensure that the many different constituent ministries all consider housing as a priority and their policies are not counterproductive to that priority."

"We are convinced that the private sector is adequately meeting housing needs."

housing policy in Canada. With 9,000 member companies and responsibility for two warranty programs in the Quebec housing industry, APCHQ is no doubt well placed to speak on behalf of the housing industry.

The association's spokesperson, Charbonneau said, "We are convinced that the private sector is adequately meeting housing needs."

However, "it could be more efficient and more cost-effective if governments from all levels did not — as they are unfortunately doing — interfere with the market. And they interfere in two major ways: either by regulating the industry, or by stimulating the demand by developing homeownership programs and fiscal policies, or by helping the most needy in our society find adequate housing by funding low-rent housing."

In particular, said Charbonneau, efforts by government aimed at stimulating the demand, which are often imposed by the economic situation, may be laudable but are sometimes inadequate or not well oriented. An example of this ineffective stimulation was the $100,000 ceiling imposed by the Government of Quebec for its homeownership program. It proved totally inadequate: The average value of a new house in the greater Montreal area is currently $131,000, and this area represents no less than 55 per cent of the Quebec market.

"Although necessary and maybe even desirable for the industry as a whole, over-regulation is very harmful for the housing industry, as it imposes an almost impossible financial and administrative situation, especially for contractors of small-scale residential projects."

The homebuilding industry is over-regulated, first and foremost because of a precedent created with the compulsory unionization of the entire building industry, said Charbonneau. "This situation is unique in North America and other industrialized countries, where small-scale residential construction is not subject to the working conditions imposed on building sites for commercial, industrial, and institutional construction."

In addition to this compulsory unionization, said Charbonneau, Quebec's housing industry must also contend with another restriction. Under the Construction Industry Relations Act, only one agency, the Association des entrepreneurs en construction du Québec, is responsible for negotiating labour relations in the industry. The end result, a unique collective agreement, is applicable to the entire construction industry.

In Charbonneau's opinion, the system "almost totally ignores the specific contingencies of the residential construction sector," where the concerns of residential contractors often differ from those held by workers in other construction sectors.

"Although necessary and maybe even desirable for the industry as a whole," said Charbonneau, "this over-regulation is very harmful for the housing industry, as it imposes an almost impossible financial and administrative situation, especially for contractors of small-scale residential projects."

These smaller contractors, in particular, should not be subjected to the same rules that apply for large companies that build huge office towers in the centre of Montreal.

Charbonneau then cited other impediments to the housing industry in Quebec, such as restrictions surrounding manpower training, as well as the costs inherent to such training programs. In addition, "a contractor is obligated to comply with the requirements of the apprentice/qualified worker relationship, which forces a contractor to hire a qualified worker when only an apprentice is needed to do the work."

Such a requirement, stipulated in the Manpower Vocational Training and Qualification Act, "has long been ineffective because of inter-ministerial disputes between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour."

The province's Occupational Health and Safety Act is another poor piece of legislation, said Charbonneau, because "it is more

a social or income support system than a mechanism for providing compensation to injured workers." The upshot is the staggering cost of enforcing the law, much of it borne by the contractors themselves.

And finally, said Charbonneau, are the myriad of regulations on urban planning, regional planning, and agricultural zoning. "A contractor working on a residential development project must confront all the different actors on the municipal scene: municipalities, regional county municipalities, municipal commissions, and other organizations created by legislation for the protection of the environment or of agricultural land."

Such complexity and duplicity, he stressed, "results only in serious inconveniences for the residential construction contractor and ultimately leads to significant construction costs, which are often impossible to support."

The end result is a stifled residential construction industry. Especially affected is the housing sector, whose profit margin is narrower.

Because of these types of constraints, Charbonneau said, APCHQ has been lobbying for a housing policy based on a return to private initiative and on an entrepreneurship mentality. Under such a policy, "the Quebec government would only intervene indirectly by providing fiscal incentives, letting the participants establish the basis of a new order given current contingencies and conditions specific to the housing sector," he said.

In defence of the motives of APCHQ, a group of contractors concerned about defending their own interests, Charbonneau mentioned that "it would be wrong to understand this definition in its most restrictive sense." Indeed, he said, through consumer protection activities, APCHQ has understood and applied the rule according to which the general interests of construction and renovation contractors — whether APCHQ members or not — are linked to the general interests of the consumers who entrusted them to do the work. The general interest of residential construction and renovation has always been more important than the particular interests of one of its members. "Therefore," said Charbonneau, "APCHQ has long ago assumed the responsibility of guaranteeing the products or services offered to consumers by its accredited members."

The warranty offered for new houses by APCHQ is the best of its type in Canada. Also, APCHQ's renovation warranty — unique in Canada — largely surpasses the one offered under the Home Warranty Program in the United States.

"To offer such solid warranties to the population of Quebec, APCHQ is relying on the qualification and accountability of its contractors. Qualifications are checked daily through site inspections and claims processing; burdensome and restrictive regulations are unnecessary because mechanisms were put in place by the industry," said Charbonneau.

"After many years of operation, we are satisfied with these [warranty] programs, and we believe that one of the reasons they are so successful is they are managed by the private sector."

Charbonneau concluded with the emphatic statement: "In short, the housing industry has shown it is serious and responsible. Beyond minimum standards, which I believe help to provide consumers with quality housing, governments are going too far by legislating left and right and by influencing the market. In fact, governments and the industry would benefit from supporting research for new products or processes, or in identifying

Question and Answer Period

Q: Your vision of the future is elevating, but what chances are there of changes ever being implemented?

Heron: Too often all of us sit on our backsides and blame the government we elected for not doing what we didn't tell them to do. There has to be a change in society whereby we challenge ourselves to make things happen. These clichés we have all heard before, but we really have to do something. The chances of making the changes happen depends on us.

Last year I was interviewed on local television and asked about what I had achieved in my year as president of the association. I said, "Nothing." And the reason for that was my frustration with the Ontario government. On one hand, you have people in the industry who are concerned about the consumers of Ontario; on the other hand, you've people who are only interested in getting re-elected. If politicians, and everyone else in this room, are honest with themselves and not interested in a self-centred attitude, we can come up with it.

Someone said to me the other day that their vision of the world in 50 years is all the Russian people will be sitting down and trying to make a new deal as they drink their vodka and eat their caviar, saying, "Isn't it awful for the poor people in the West who can't get anything done because of controls." I hope this is not the future we are facing.

Q: Mr. Heron, I would like to know what you would need to begin the production or incorporate the inclusion of affordable rental and ownership housing units within your plans of subdivision or land holdings?

Heron: I believe that the words "affordable housing" were coined by our premier in Ontario before the last election, but I don't know what people mean when they use them. They came up with some indication with a 60th and 30th percentile. However, when one talks about affordable housing, every house sold in Ontario — which is close to 80,000 — was affordable to someone. Isn't the answer that we are out to provide housing for more Ontarians? Or more Canadians?

Q: The crisis group at whom we are looking — the 0-60th percentile — and certainly the income statistics make it appear that the 0-30th percentile are going to need rental housing because no one is going to be able to build a house and make it available at that price. The 30th-60th percentile group could perhaps get into homeownership if a product was on the market at a price less than $175,000 in the Greater Metropolitan area. It doesn't look as if the building industry is interested in producing many, if any, of the units targeted to those people.

Heron: There is a criticism that the industry is not building for this price range, but it is extremely tough for builders to build houses and sell them at $175,000, particularly in Toronto, when the provincial and federal governments are selling 40-foot lots at $160,000. We cannot build houses and maintain our overhead for $17,000. For instance, the provincial government, in partnership with the federal government, sold lots in Scarborough — land that had been government-owned for a long time — in the open market at prices that had never been heard of before: $4,000 a front foot. This was the same government, the same premier, who had talked about affordable housing.

We won't create answers to the housing problem by suggesting what can be done in a quick fix.

basic standards and trying to improve them together. Governments have a great role to play in informing the public in a less regulated market. But when you get right down to it, public information, construction expertise, and a wide range of contractors are probably the only prerequisites that the housing market really needs."

USING RRAP/PARQ INNOVATIVELY

INITIATIVES MUNICIPALES EN MATIÈRE DE RÉHABILITATION RÉSIDENTIELLE

Robert Lajoie (Chair)
Director, Strategic Planning and Policy Development
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Daniel l'Écuyer
Director, Urban Planning Department
City of Verdun, Québec

Raynald Simard
Department Head, Program Management Section
Urban Planning Department
City of Québec

Tom Yauk
Commissioner
Planning and Community Services
City of Winnipeg

This session focuses on the experiences three Canadian cities — Winnipeg, Manitoba; Verdun, Quebec; and Quebec City, Quebec — have had with their residential rehabilitation programs.

Cet atelier porte sur les programmes de remise en état résidentielle de trois villes canadiennes: Winnipeg, au Manitoba, ainsi que Verdun et Québec, au Québec.

"Verdun's recent experience in rehabilitation — an example of partnerships in action — could surely serve as a starting point to many Quebec municipalities who feel the need to get involved in urban renewal," said Daniel l'Écuyer in his opening remarks to delegates attending the session *Using RRAP/PARCQ Innovatively*.

With a population of nearly 100,000 and an excellent location, Verdun was one of the most promising municipalities of the Montreal metropolitan area, said the director of Verdun's urban planning department. But it, too, had its problems with an aging building stock. More than 60 per cent of the 23,500 housing units from the older part of Verdun (excluding Île des Soeurs — Nuns' Island) were built before 1946, with approximately 12,000 units

built before 1929. A 1982 survey helped to ir dicate the extent of rehabilitation needed in the centre core: Out of nearly 10,000 units evaluated, some 6,000 required average repairs and 600 required major repairs.

For Verdun, said l'Écuyer, "it was estimated that the total rehabilitation activity represented at least $240 million. The decision to provide rehabilitation assistance is just a part of a major action plan designed to help the city recapture its place in the metropolitan area."

Two other factors characterize Verdun's older neighborhoods, l'Écuyer added. Eighty per cent of all units are rental units, and Verdun has the lowest real estate evaluation per capita for the entire metropolitan area — $13,000 in 1986. In fact, he said, the only entities with which Verdun can be compared in terms of housing are the old neighbourhoods of Montreal and Quebec City.

Before 1982 to 1985, when the housing program Loginove helped rehabilitate some 200 units per year in Verdun and a municipal program was used to demolish old sheds, very little rehabilitation was done without grants. From 1973 to 1980, the average annual value of improvement permits was $800,000 (in 1981 dollars), while this average rose to $3.1 million (in 1981 dollars) from 1981 to 1985, when grant programs were introduced.

Parallel to this strong renovation activity, said l'Écuyer, was a very strong demand for Loginove. From July 1982 to August 1986, more than 1,850 grant applications were received — an average of more than 450 units per uear.

Then, on October 3, 1986, the picture drastically changed: This was when the new Canada-Quebec Rehabilitation Assistance Program (PARCQ) replaced the joint Loginove/RRAP program. By the fall of 1987, said l'Écuyer, not a single housing unit had been rehabilitated in Verdun under this program, adding that "a certain reluctance toward the novelty of this program can probably explain the slowing-down of activity but surely not a total halt, as was experienced in Verdun and several other Quebec municipalities."

When it was introduced, PARCQ was difficult to deliver in urban areas. Compared to Loginove, it included too many constraints:

- the income ceiling by household was too low to effectively reach homeowners willing to renovate;
- the $5,000 maximum grant for homeowners was not high enough to reassure mortgage lenders dealing with low-income households, who were targeted with the program;
- the elimination of the portion of the grant targeted for preventive changes (windows and doors, storage spaces, cupboards, etc.);
- a decrease in the grant ceiling for eligible work, amounting to a drop in the grant in cases of major repairs;
- the establishment, by the Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ), of the subsequent post-rehabilitation maximum rent increase prior to negotiations between the landlord and tenants;

"[Verdun's own municipal rehabilitation] program was not developed alone but with partners. This is one of the factors that makes it so unique."

- the investment necessary to carry out the non-eligible work is not included in the calculations of the maximum rent increase established by the SHQ;

- the ambiguity about post-rehabilitation rent control;

- the landlord agreement lasting 15 years as opposed to only five years for Loginove; and

- the obligation to provide a mortgage warranty to the SHQ.

Faced with this situation, the City of Verdun decided to get involved financially and to complement PARCQ. L'Écuyer said the city wanted to benefit from the budget provided by PARCQ and to initiate a major rehabilitation movement on its territory. But there were misgivings. "Historically, the Government of Quebec has never been keen on transferring this responsibility to municipalities. The government always doubted municipalities could adequately design and manage rehabilitation assitance programs. Only Montreal and Quebec City were granted this authority through an amendment of their charter."

And so things proceeded. In January 1988, Bill 245 amended the City of Verdun's charter so it could develop a rehabilitation assistance program. But because the Government of Quebec "wanted to ensure it was not opening the door to all Quebec municipalities by granting this authority to the city," said l'Écuyer, "it felt a need to fully demonstrate that Verdun's case was unique because of its rehabilitation needs."

For this reason, "the City of Verdun appears to be an innovator on which both the Government of Quebec and many municipalities are keeping a close eye," said l'Écuyer. "They want to find out if a municipality can fairly manage a rehabilitation program outside the framework of senior governments and whether this initiative can be an important asset for municipalities where the housing stock has deteriorated over the years."

In April 1988, the Verdun Rehabilitation Assistance Program really took off, following a promotion campaign with homeowners.

For its 10-year development program, the City of Verdun has set seven major rehabilitation objectives.

- to ensure everyone has access to housing that meets minimal suitability standards;

- to target the most deteriorated housing units while taking into consideration existing tenants;

- to upgrade the general quality of housing in Verdun's older neighbourhoods by providing grants for the rehabilitation of 300 units per year;

- in the long term, for each unit renovated with the help of a grant, to make certain two are renovated without grants, thus ensuring the continuing renewal of Verdun's housing stock;

- to concentrate, as much as possible, rehabilitation assistance in city districts identified as being the most affected in terms of houing quality;

"That the city's program involves other major participants has helped create a climate of trust."

- to make adequate use of the financial and social resources available; and

- to ensure the municipal rehabilitation assistance program is a long-term inititative and helps meet an increasing volume of activity.

According to l'Écuyer, Verdun's municipal program is designed to complement PARCQ as it is targeted to homeowners and landlords who are not adequately covered under the federal/provincial program. Eligible are all buildings in Verdun, except those on Nun's Island. These single- or multi-unit buildings must require major repairs, and the cost of eligible repairs must reach a minimum average of $7,500 per unit. The list of eligible repairs is more comprehensive than the repairs covered under PARCQ, said l'Écuyer. In addition, preventive work (improvement of doors and windows, cupboards, storage, etc.) is eligible for up to 25 per cent of the cost of essential repairs, up to a maximum of $2,500 per unit.

Homeowners and landlords (including corporations, non-profits, and co-operatives) are eligible, regardless of income or amount of rent charged.

The procedure used to establish the amount of the municipal grant varies according to the grant allocated under PARCQ. This amount is established as follows:

"Quebec City's municipal land reserve has proven to be a valuable tool in residential development."

- when the rate of financial assistance available under PARCQ is higher than or equal to 50 per cent, the amount of the municipal grant corresponds to 50 per cent of the part of the cost of repairs not eligible for the PARCQ grant;

- when the rate of the financial assistance available under PARCQ is inferior to 50 per cent, the amount of the municipal grant corresponds to 50 per cent of the cost of repairs, less the amount of the PARCQ grant for which the homeowner is eligible, whether applied for or not; and

- up to a maximum municipal grant of $5,000 per unit.

"These were the major parameters of the program, but this program was not developed alone [but] with partners. This is one of the factors that makes it innovative," said l'Écuyer.

To ensure the Verdun Rehabilitation Assistance Program would be successful, it was important that all participants be able to benefit. Hence, the city joined forces with several economic partners, who took part in the program in their own way: Quebec Provincial Home Builders' Association (APCHQ), Verdun Caisses Populaires, and Gaz Metropolitain. A letter of agreement was signed with these three partners.

The economic partnership works in the following manner.

Eligible repairs for the grant program must be registered under APCHQ's rehabilitation warranty (except repairs done by the owner). Of course, registration fees are included in the grant. The city wants to ensure the repairs it subsidizes are done according to the rules of the trade and to approved specifications. APCHQ administers its renovation warranty and conducts site inspections, which reduces somewhat the work of municipal inspectors.

The Caisses Populaires offer a 0.5 per cent discount in the interest rate for short-term loans (one year) and a 0.25 per cent

discount for three-year loans to fund renovation activities under the municipal program. In addition, administrative fees are waived on loan applications for renovation projects eligible under the program.

Finally, Gaz Metropolitain offers all Verdun homeowners a grant of up to $1,000 per unit if they want to change their heating system to natural gas. In addition to this grant, Gaz Metropolitain offers technical support to homeowners interested in upgrading their gas heating system.

On the social side of housing, the city brought in the Verdun Citizen's Action Committee, whose job it is to ensure tenants will be protected as much as possible against inconveniences usually associated with residential renovation. As soon as a landlord applies for a grant, all the tenants receive a letter informing them of their basic rights and of the resources they can consult if they feel their rights have been infringed. Upon approval of the grant, the tenants receive another letter informing them of the nature of the work to be done, with more specific information on their rights (calculating the rent increase, compensation in case of temporary relocation, legal notices, etc.).

In addition, when a landlord benefits both from PARCQ and the Verdun program, the tenants also benefit because the maximum rent increase is lower than if the landlord had only benefited from PARCQ. Indeed, said l'Écuyer, the portion of the municipal grant allowed for eligible repairs (excluding preventive work) is included in the calculation of the maximum authorized rent increase.

For buildings not eligible for PARCQ funding and for which the temporary relocation of the occupants is necessary, the municipal program provides compensation for the tenants. The amount of the compensation is the same as that offered under PARCQ.

The success of the municipal program speaks for itself, said l'Écuyer. "Before the introduction of the municipal program, only one PARCQ application had been processed by the municipality. Obviously, with the introduction of the municipal program, some improvements were made to PARCQ that certainly had a positive impact. Although the municipal program is too recent to evaluate its full impact, said l'Écuyer, one can gauge to some extent its successful takeup. From April 1988 to April 1989, "we received more than 174 program applications, for a total of 633 units. Of these, 54 have been or are about to be approved, for a total of 197 units; this means close to $5 million in renovation work, and nearly $2 million in grants from PARCQ and $750,000 in grants from the municipal program. In addition, 85 applications are currently being processed."

Of the 54 applications, said l'Écuyer, the following facts are known:

- 43 applicants benefited from combined grants from PARCQ and the municipal program, while nine benefited only from the municipal program and two benefited only from PARCQ;
- eight homeowners benefited only from the municipal grant, while 46 landlords benefited from combined grants from the two programs;
- the average cost of major repairs was $24,300 per unit for rental units and $16,650 for owner-occupied units; and

"The St. Roch special intervention program is a good example of urban revitalization because it includes [a good mixture of assistance programs and investments]."

"We have small dwellings badly in need of repair. These dwellings relate to the basic, fundamental needs of shelter. They are not extravagant. They are not flamboyant. They are simply basic, standard forms of shelter.

- the average grant per unit was $13,600, of which $10,700 was given under PARCQ, the difference coming from the municipal program.

"Up to now, no application was abandoned because of disagreement between the landlord and tenants, although, in some cases, we had to intervene as conciliator. The huge success of the program is no doubt due to adequate information being provided and the ready acceptance by landlords of the rules of the game," l'Écuyer said.

The Verdun Rehabilitation Assistance Program, in operation for over a year, is a success, declared l'Écuyer. By combining the federal/provincial program with a special municipal program, both landlords and tenants have been able to benefit from rehabilitation activities.

Providing accurate information on the rules of the game, both to landlords and tenants, seems to have guaranteed the program's success. Moreover, the obligation to register under the renovation warranty program is reassuring to both landlords and tenants, and has yielded positive results in terms of the quality of the work.

"That the program involves most of the participants has certainly helped create a climate of trust," l'Écuyer added.

Given the obvious success of the program, l'Écuyer called on the federal government, which recently decided to withdraw from the program as a partner, to do so progressively and sensitively.

Quebec City has taken an active part in the revitalization of its buildings — heritage and otherwise — since the early 1970s, for the most part because much of the stock in the central core is quite old and needs continual rehabilitation. Stressed Raynald Simard, head of the city's program management section in the urban planning department, in his opening remarks: "It is estimated that 10 per cent of the housing stock — 8,000 units — requires major repairs, of which 6,000 units are concentrated in the central district. This shows how important it is for Quebec City to continue its rehabilitation activities."

The city seriously began an active rehabilitation program in 1975 — after the era of mega-projects — first concentrating on a commitment it had made to protect residential areas in the central neighbourhoods. Residents were consulted to identify their needs, and neighbourhood improvement operations were initiated through land clearance and neighbourhood improvement programs, said Simard. To complement these programs, other rehabilitation grant programs were added, such as the joint Quebec City–SHQ program and then RRAP.

The first area targeted was the St. Sauveur district, with a potential of 6,000 units and a population of 25,000. Later, other districts were added.

In 1977, the city opened its first district office in St. Sauveur. Later, in 1979 and 1980, during the expansion phases of rehabilitation areas, two other offices were opened in the St. Jean-Baptiste and Limoilou districts. The role of the district office was varied: In addition to providing rehabilitation services to the citizens, it disseminated information on municipal projects and consultation services; it also helped to relocate displaced households after deteriorated buildings were acquired by the city under the land clearance program. Said Simard, "From 1977 to 1981,

the district office was at the heart of the action when Quebec City conducted a major neighbourhood cleanup campaign and improved public services, with joint investments of $13.5 million."

Following this period, district offices continued to operate but were mainly involved in providing renovation advice and various services to the population. For example, in emergency situations, people in need of housing could contact the district office to get information on the availability of adequate housing in the city.

After such a great start, by 1977, only 1,100 units were renovated, whereas the historic average was around 500. "Rehabilitation showed signs of tiring, while costs increased and programs were becoming less generous," said Simard.

To combat this, in 1981, the city developed its first complementary rehabilitation program, which helped renovate 946 units. This compared with 259 units renovated the previous year. The high point of this provincial/municipal effort, he said, was the conversion of the Bon Pasteur complex, an abandoned institutional building with great architectural and historic value. This 225-unit project included, under seven housing co-operatives, clienteles as varied as low-income households, single-parent families, near-retirement public servants, and senior citizens.

This initiative received the support of the standing committee on housing, created in 1979 and including municipal councillors and public servants. In its orientation report, the committee focused its priority on central neighbourhoods and set the following objectives:

- stop the population drop in central neighbourhoods;
- increase housing production on unused lands by giving priority to low-income households;
- rehabilitate buildings that require major repairs; and
- improve the residential environment.

Thus, 3,300 low-rent units were built on municipal lands.

In addition, in 1981, the city created a program called *Bâtir en ville* (Building in the City), which made available unused municipal land. This program helped create 350 new units. In 1982, after the Corvée Habitation program, Quebec City announced a construction initiative that included three facets.

The first facet was a grant program for new construction, which granted $3,000 per new unit constructed. By the time of the program's expiry in 1985, 1,000 new units had been added to the existing stock.

The second facet focused on the conversion of non-residential buildings into residential housing. Through this program, the city wanted to encourage the production of new housing units while preserving its housing heritage. This program also provided a $3,000 per unit grant and helped produce 1,100 new units.

The third facet was the creation of a municipal land reserve for residential purposes. This reserve helps the city to acquire sites that can be used for residential development, including land for the Bâtir en ville program. The reserve was also used to sell land at low cost to non-profit organizations for the production of social housing. According to Simard, "it has proven to be a valuable tool in residential development."

In addition to being involved in the production of low-rental units for senior citizens, the city encourages the construction and

"The City of Winnipeg has effectively brought together and used resources around it. By 1988, the home repair program had seen the renovation of 9,000 units at a cost of $70 million dollars."

"The recent announcement of the discontinuation of RRAP funding ($20 million in Winnipeg) for the landlord program will have a devastating effect on the city."

renovation of units for single-parent families and low- and moderate-income households by providing technical assistance to co-operatives and non-profit organizations. In addition, in 1981, the city created the Société municipale d'Habitation Champlain, whose own contribution involved adding 753 units to the social housing stock. And since 1980, said Simard, the city has also been offering a grant program for the demolition of old sheds and other dilapidated structures that detract from the quality of life.

All these initiatives, implemented in the central districts, "have contributed to strengthening the residential function, of which the rehabilitation program was one of the major components." Since the beginning of the program, in 1975, 4,200 units had already benefited from grants under RRAP and the joint program.

In 1982, the Government of Quebec introduced its residential rehabilitation program, Loginove, which put an end to joint programs and to the municipal complementary rehabilitation program. This program was better adapted and more generous than the preceding programs, and helped stimulate rehabilitation activities. Under this program, the city was able to renovate 1,500 units.

"However, costs were becoming astronomical, and very little could be done in some districts due to the state of deterioration of the structures, the lack of interest from investors, and the fact that residents did not have the capacity to pay higher rents."

Thus, the city created a special intervention program in the St. Roch district. This program included several facets: public investments (infrastructure, roads, and sidewalks), demolition of older buildings and reconstruction of low-rental housing, a shed demolition and backyard improvement program, and a $3,000 municipal grant in addition to the grant provided under Loginove. This helped to renovate 250 units in three years "in a district where nothing was being done," said Simard.

To stimulate the demand, a district office was opened and a promotion campaign offering professional architectural services developed for homeowners. "The St. Roch special intervention program is a good example of urban revitalization," said Simard, "because it includes all the types of intervention mentioned earlier: investments from municipal departments, private or co-operative investments, public housing, land availability, and rehabilitation grants."

The introduction of RRAP in 1987 — along with its social dimension — did not help to solve the difficulties inherent to program delivery. Quite the opposite! The city was targeting more difficult cases but with less resources. "With an average rehabilitation cost of $20,000 per unit, an average grant of $9,000 per unit, and a clientele of low-income households, nothing could be done. The year 1987 was to be the worst for rehabilitation in Quebec City — unheard-of in 15 years of rehabilitation," said Simard.

On a positive note, however, PARCQ made it possible for the city to renovate boarding houses.

And then along came the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. "Everyone was made aware of the problem. The inspection department in co-operation with the fire protection department and the Ministry of Labour created a systematic inspection program of the 3,000 rooms on the territory. The city created a grant program for the rehabilitation of rooms to bring them up to minimum standards: $3,000 per room in addition to the PARCQ grant. To date, 85 have been renovated."

Many other projects are under way, Simard added. "The objective is to renovate 300 rooms in three years, which represents 10 per cent of the stock, with a minimal rent increase."

In 1988, the Société d'habitation du Québec expanded its program; the City of Quebec, to stimulate housing rehabilitation, decided to complement PARCQ by adding a grant that could reach $5,000 per unit. "We expected 1989 to be a record year. Everything was in place: inspection staff, municipal budgets of over $1 million, an objective of 500 units," said Simard. "And then, on May 2, a surprising decision was announced that had heavy consequences because it came right in the middle of programming."

The credibility of those responsible for the delivery of the program has been affected, and many citizens who had put much hope and energy into improving their living conditions are bitterly disappointed.

PARCQ was better targeted than its successors. Quebec City attempted to target it even better by giving priority to bringing its deteriorated residential housing units and rooming houses up to minimum standards. In addition, municipal intervention was to be concentrated in central neighbourhoods, where the majority of low-income households are found.

Finally, explained Simard, "by reducing the investment required of the owner, the municipal rehabilitation program helped reduce the post-renovation rent increase. "Personally, I believe that PARCQ, as it is delivered in Quebec City, is well targeted."

In conclusion, Simard stressed the necessity of maintaining construction assistance programs to ensure adequate housing in older neighbourhoods, in combination with personal assistance programs, so that renovated housing remains affordable for the most needy households.

The message that the rehabilitation process is very much a part of community development was reiterated with vigour by the next speaker of the session.

"We cannot consider rehabilitation in a vacuum," began Tom Yauk, the commissioner of planning and community services for the City of Winnipeg. "It is part of a much larger process." In accordance with that philosophy, Winnipeg uses a renovation process integrally related to neighbourhood and community development. The inter-related process is unique in Canada; it is the product of a number of cross-referenced and multiple-funded programs."

In 1973, Winnipeg simultaneously began its neighbourhood improvement program and started delivering RRAP. A budget of $100,000 was allocated by the city to cost-share with other senior governments, and, according to Yauk, his primary activity from that time forward has been a search for resources. Despite years of delivery through an ad hoc committee of city councillors, Winnipeg does not have a rehabilitation program. It is now considering a rehabilitation strategy, and Winnipeg is finally looking at "a new era in terms of housing and neighbourhood improvement strategy development."

Because the houses in Winnipeg are primarily wood-frame construction, their age and the severity of many winters has exacted a great toll on the existing housing stock. "We do not have the character homes," said Yauk. "We have small dwellings badly in need of repair. These dwellings relate to the basic, fundamental

needs of shelter. They are not extravagant. They are not flamboyant. They are simply basic, standard forms of shelter." Yet, the resources required to get this simple housing stock back in shape are enormous.

The first renovation job under the program was a house repaired by a Masters student doing a thesis in architecture. The house, to be either fixed up or torn down, was acquired by the city in a tax sale and subsequently renovated.

After that, said Yauk, the department attempted to identify the other resources required to make the program a success. "We brought several city departments together; imported a program from the United States called the Neighbourhood Development Program (which to some extent became the forerunner of Winnipeg's Neighbourhood Improvement Program); and tried to bring resources together within the context of a neighbourhood." This merging of a number of programs has been the city's legacy, or history, in terms of the delivery of housing renovation programming.

Operating initially through the Neighbourhood Improvement Program (which is no longer in existence), RRAP has been the renovation anchor in Winnipeg and, until 1981, basically the only dedicated program used by the city for this purpose. It has been supplemented in whatever way possible. For example, after realizing it did not have enough money to pump into RRAP for homeowners of low and modest incomes, the department used training programs through Canada Manpower and the city's social services department, thereby eliminating the need to obtain municipal funding or establish a provincial support base to fund these two groups. To increase the level of renovation supplied, work funded through RRAP was "topped up" by the efforts of a labour pool established to provide free labour to specific homeowners, said Yauk.

"In later years, we have done the same with a Winnipeg church group called Habitat for Humanity. The Habitat group has actually come together as a labour pool and has increased the level of work." An exciting and rewarding experiment for Yauk's group, Habitat has been the enabling mechanism in the side-by-side co-operation of homeowner and Habitat volunteers in the improvement of a particular dwelling.

As an ongoing home repair resource, RRAP has played a critical and virtually solo role in the preservation of Winnipeg's existing housing stock. "There is no need to look at data and analyze statistics to appreciate the need for such a program in Winnipeg. Just drive north and south of the CPR tracks, and you will find a veritable sea of housing deterioration, of houses still in need of attention."

According to Yauk, the program has for the most part been concentrated — neighbourhood specific — despite the fact that the current federal program is not itself targeted to neighbourhoods. "We have always tried to identify with that neighbourhood base, linking RRAP with neighbourhood improvement and even social service or social development programming."

Indeed, Winnipeg's neighbourhood improvement program is still ongoing. Replacing the federal neighbourhood improvement program, said Yauk, is the Manitoba/Winnipeg Community Revitalization Program, which funds neighbourhood improvement on a 50/50 cost-shared basis with the Province of Manitoba.

Yauk believes the city's concentrated neighbourhood improvement approach has been a success. Allocated to one particular area — the neighbourhood in which the city's first renovation project took place — 485 of the 650 homes in the single-family

community have been repaired under RRAP. "Within that neighbourhood," said Yauk, "and linked to other services, every road had been resurfaced, every boulevard reconstructed, new parks developed, and community centres and daycares created." (Yauk noted that a group of teachers and students belonging to that same community also built the city's first nine infill houses, fulfilling the department's desire to create something new, as well as restore the old.)

The 1973 initial neighbourhood improvement allotment of $100,000 had, by 1988, grown to more than $150 million, of which more than $100 million came directly from municipal resources. The original staff of six had grown to 55. "The City of Winnipeg has effectively brought together and used the resources around it. By 1988, the home repair program had seen the renovation of 9,000 units at a cost of $70 million dollars."

In 1981, a special $96 million program called the Core Area Initiative was developed for Winnipeg on a trilateral cost-shared basis. The planning department's community programs division identified a program in excess of $20 million to identify with RRAP, home repair, and neighbourhood improvement targeted at Winnipeg's inner city. Between the years 1983 and 1987, Yauk's department effected the repair of more than 1,000 units per year under that initiative.

The second phase of the program is now under way with a $100 million trilaterally shared budget.

In those same years, the department was able to develop levels of assistance for renovation programming not previously available. "Under the first core area initiative program, for example," said Yauk, "the province decided to subsidize the RRAP interest rate for homeowners, which enticed a great many more people to enter the program. It also identified other, new forms of provincial support relating both to neighbourhood improvement and to housing renovation. We identified programs within our neighbourhood for non-profit support, extensively relating that support to the restoration of older buildings. We stimulated native housing organizations, co-ops, and non-profit organizations. We also provided assistance to the Winnipeg Housing Rehabilitation Corporation, which was looking very desperately for funding at that time."

While several resources came together under the core initiative, the program's most important effect was its ability to provide an increased level of funding for RRAP itself. "We were able to establish a landlord budget — a direct funding conduit to landlords when annual CMHC funding ran out — which really heightened the participation of Winnipeg's previously reluctant landlord community in RRAP."

On the homeowner's side, the initiative provided the department with a level of funding to increase forgiveness to low-income homeowners under the Hardship Program, as well as an additional forgivable grant of $1,250 to homeowners. The department was also able to establish a program called the Core Area Grant for Homeownership, which initially provided a grant of $5,000 to low-income earners for the purchase of a home. As that program developed, the grant was increased to $10,000.

Thus, in Winnipeg, said Yauk, a "matrix" of programs was effectively drawn together to facilitate the city's desperate need for renovation dollars. Through a long-standing association with NAHRO, and its conservation and rehabilitation committee, Yauk has been able to import successful programs to Winnipeg. Of particular importance, he said, is the Core Area Residential Upgrading and Maintenance Program (CARUMP), an area by-law

enforcement program, which has had a definite impact on the more negligent members of Winnipeg's absentee-owner and landlord community.

CARUMP merges housing inspection and social service delivery. A staff of housing inspectors works with social workers and "home support teachers." A team of two is assigned to a particular building, where one member inspects the physical condition of the dwelling and the other looks at the needs of the family or families inhabiting it. If the family needs assistance on a day-to-day basis, a third player, a home support teacher, works directly with the family.

Because the program is delivered on an area rather than complaint basis, tenants are relieved of the need to complain — and are not faced with threat of eviction on these grounds. As with all the department's programs, said Yauk, this one is well-publicized. "We operate our neighbourhood improvement efforts through decentralized delivery and maintain an effective communications network with our neighbourhoods. People know that we are there and that we are a valuable resource."

"RRAP has been tremendously important in Winnipeg, but our housing stock is still desperately in need of attention," Yauk said in conclusion. "The recent announcement of the discontinuation of RRAP funding ($20 million in Winnipeg) for the landlord program will have a devastating effect on the city. This aspect of RRAP has been an unequivocal success. Our once-reluctant landlords love it. For the first time, they have had enough money to effectively repair their buildings. It is imperative we at least maintain that basic level of national funding. The partnerships we have forged must be furthered. We have greater provincial support and municipal commitment, but we need the continued centrality of allocation through RRAP."

HOUSING RURAL CANADIANS: THE FLIP SIDE

LE LOGEMENT ABORDABLE EN MILIEU RURAL

Susan Rickards (Chair)
Special Assistant to the Minister of Housing
New Brunswick Housing Corporation

Tom Carter
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Much has been written about the pastoral nature of rural Canada. Little, however, has been written of the fact that rural areas have the highest proportion of substandard housing and the lowest incomes than any other area in Canada. This session examines the negative aspect of rural living: the housing problems and concerns facing rural dwellers, both native and non-native.

On a beaucoup écrit sur l'aspect champêtre du Canada rural, mais on mentionne peu souvent que les régions rurales ont la plus grande proportion de logements inférieurs aux normes et les revenus les plus faibles au Canada. Cet atelier examine l'aspect négatif de la vie en milieu rural: les problèmes de logement et les préoccupations des ménages ruraux, autochtones et non autochtones.

The chair, Susan Rickards, special assistant to the New Brunswick Minister of Housing, set the tone for the session *Housing Rural Canadians: The Flip Side* when she observed that, because people living in rural areas are scattered, they often do not have a voice in policy-making, program discussions, or any of the important matters affecting them.

Noting the problems of the larger, urban centres had dominated the conference while the rural voice, despite its very real and distinct problems, had been virtually silent, Tom Carter, acting director of the Institute of Urban Studies in Winnipeg and associate professor of geography at the University of Manitoba, seemed to prove Rickards's theory.

"One of the difficulties encountered when talking about rural housing problems," said Carter, "is our definition of rural areas." To many, he said, the term 'rural' denotes areas of pastoral homogeneity and conjures up images of places with similar characteristics and similar problems. In truth, this is far from the case.

"One of the difficulties encountered when talking about rural housing problems is our definition of rural areas."

According to Carter, Manitoba alone has three specific and different rural areas with quite different housing policies: the remote, northern communities, in which the problems are largely associated with the aboriginal people (Metis, status/non-status, and a limited number of Inuit); the small, service communities in the more southern, agriculturally-based areas; and the farm households. "They all have their own, unique set of problems, and they all demand different solutions."

Lumping all rural areas together in one category is one of the greatest mistakes we have made, said Carter. "We have tried to create policies that treat all rural areas in the same way, but because these communities are not homogeneous, a single policy cannot be used consistently throughout."

In terms of the remote and northern communities in Manitoba, said Carter, it must first of all be noted the income of the aboriginal people is much lower than that of the non-aboriginal people. Some 22 per cent of them, in fact, have no income at all, and 19 per cent earn less than $3,000. Moving up the income range, there is increasingly non-aboriginal dominance. Unemployment rates are also much higher among the aboriginal peoples: Only about 39 per cent of the province's aboriginal people are employed as opposed to 63 per cent of non-aboriginal people.

In addition, the aboriginal population has a substantially younger age profile than that of the non-aboriginal population. Approximately 39 per cent of the aboriginal population is under the age of 15 compared to about 20 per cent of the non-aboriginal population. At the other end of the scale, about 13 per cent of the non-aboriginal population is more than 65 years of age compared to only three per cent of the aboriginal population.

Aboriginal households tend to be much larger than non-aboriginal households, said Carter. There is also a much higher proportion of single-parent families in native communities. In terms of skill levels, aboriginal peoples have substantially less education.

"Given all these characteristics," said Carter, "substantial improvements in employment and income are unlikely in the short term. Housing circumstances, therefore, are much worse in the aboriginal communities, and the proportion of households in need is much higher."

Some characteristics about the communities themselves, however, are quite different, and very important when it comes to housing policies and housing programs, said Carter. "The communities are small and scattered and often isolated. They have weak, unstable economies; many of them are welfare-based. In many of these centres, there is little in the way of sustained employment. They lack the basic services taken for granted in larger, urban communities. And what we would consider a standard housing market mechanism is absent. The private sector cannot be depended on to provide accommodation."

As well, aboriginal people have traditionally regarded housing simply as shelter, whereas non-aboriginal people in larger, urban communities are inclined to look at housing as both shelter and investment.

For more than a decade, and in the absence of a private market mechanism, housing for these communities has been primarily supplied through the federal rural and native program. Both supply and affordability remain a problem. Because the rural and native program uses a mortgage mechanism, regular payments to mortgages are inherent, a condition that does not necessarily suit prevailing economic circumstances. Mortgages are often as large as $90,000, and in a remote northern Manitoba community, said Carter, vendors are lucky to get $15,000 for a unit.

Lately, said Carter, other issues have eclipsed those of affordability and supply. Many remote communities are beginning to discard their traditional views and are looking at housing as not just shelter but as contributors to community development. "The aboriginal people of these rural areas now believe housing must be geared to providing community-based employment and training opportunities," said Carter. "Housing must increase local job options and should make use of local materials. The native people also believe the community should be involved in planning and development, and in property management and ongoing maintenance and repairs." Concern has arisen over the inflexibility of construction standards demanded under the program, standards that do not seem appropriate given community circumstances. "What these people are really looking for," said Carter, "is more local control. They want housing to be treated as part of the overall economic development of the community and used as a tool to maximize local activities."

According to Carter, however, this kind of autonomy is not generally reflected in the policy approaches of either CMHC or the province. "They have been rather adamantly opposed to the extensive use of housing for objectives beyond the provision of shelter — and for good reason. Often, it is very difficult for a housing agency to incorporate community economic development objectives into its housing programs. It makes integration with other communities a necessity and incurs costs that are not necessarily housing-related."

Nevertheless, insisted Carter, the issue is critical for these communities, and it is important to look at it from their point of view. "It is difficult for these people to watch outside contractors coming into their communities to build houses while their own people sit idle and in desperate need of skills training."

A demonstration program initiated by CMHC several years ago might be one answer to the affordability problem. Under this program, the client does not have to worry about the relationship between the mortgage and housing values in the community because there is no payment to a mortgage. While the client is responsible for home maintenance and utility costs, the program uses a housing option in which the mortgage is written off upfront.

Although it was not intended to be a community-based economic development tool, the program has been well received in Manitoba. Primarily addressing the affordability issue, the program has also, to a certain extent, successfully addressed the issue of local or household involvement. "There is considerable self-help or sweat equity built into the delivery of these particular units," Carter told the audience, "with the clients themselves providing much of the labour. This, of course, has spinoffs with respect to skills enhancement and pride in ownership, which lead to higher levels of maintenance by the occupant."

Another benefit is the cost of each housing unit can be dramatically reduced with substantial involvement of the clients themselves. "Initial figures suggest that, overall, this housing will be 25 to 30 per cent cheaper," said Carter. "Indeed, some units have been built for 50 per cent less than the same unit built under the rural and native program."

Considerable flexibility with respect to construction standards has also been built into the program. In particular, servicing has been geared to match existing community servicing and is not the rigid building standard that it is under the rural and native housing program. Although the program does not promote the level of local involvement and control some communities would like, said Carter, most feel it is a step in the right direction.

"What these people are really looking for is more local control. They want housing to be treated as part of the overall economic development of the community and used as a tool to maximize local activities."

"By building high-quality public stock for senior citizens and failing to examine other options, we are jeopardizing the private stock."

Unfortunately, the program has its downside as well. "These houses are not being delivered to enough communities," said Carter, "according to feedback from the rural and remote areas." They are not being erected in communities already sporting units built under the rural and native program as delivery would create an inequitable situation. Demonstration program households would be making no payments to mortgage, while rural and native program households would be making regular mortgage payments. Again, for reasons of equity, the program would not be viable in communities possessing a functional private market.

It has also been suggested that at some point the program will be unable to recruit households able to make a contribution in terms of the labour component. Carter believes, however, under these circumstances the community itself may well be prepared to provide at least a portion of the requisite labour component.

While the program is certainly more expensive upfront, admitted Carter, it is possible it may be cheaper in the long run. Annual public subsidies required for some rural and native program units in northern Saskatchewan can be as great as $14,000 per unit after client revenue has been subtracted. So, although writing off a mortgage upfront is initially expensive, there is reason to believe down-the-road savings may be considerable.

"This may be a promising option," said Carter, "even if CMHC is forced to write off mortgages on the older portfolio of rural and native program housing units in order to make wider use of the demonstration project — short-term pain for long-term gain."

Turning to the more southerly Manitoba service and agricultural communities, Carter noted most, and particularly those with populations of less than 500, have been experiencing substantial decline since the early 1960s. Over the last 25 years, these communities have lost anywhere up to one-third of their populations. As well, and perhaps more importantly in the housing context, these communities are exhibiting an aging profile. Not only is the general population aging, but there is movement of senior citizens away from farming communities to these communities. Some small Manitoba communities are now faced with a situation in which more than 50 per cent of their population is over the age of 65.

It is becoming increasingly apparent, said Carter, that future housing needs and trends are going to be dictated, to a large extent, by the elderly population. There will be continued demand for housing for the elderly. Although a substantial number of seniors' units have already been built, most of these were designed for independent living. With an aging population that will live longer, future demand will centre on supportive housing options: housing in conjunction with care-related services that is likely to further concentrate the population in some of the larger rural communities.

Many of the elderly in these communities are mortgage-free homeowners. While some of them own new units, many possess aging stock. Little has been done in the way of significant renovation or home improvement on much of this stock, said Carter, and if it is going to be maintained, a much greater emphasis will have to be placed on programs such as RRAP.

One of Carter's real concerns is that the new senior citizens' housing being built by government or third-sector sponsors in these communities is, far and away, the best housing available. "This certainly raises problems for the private sector, or the local investors in the community who own the existing rental stock of four-, eight- and twelve-plexes." Historically, these investors

have depended on the younger population for their livelihood. With the migration of the young from these communities, however, senior citizens have provided investors with another demand component. As this group moves on to superior rent-to-income related housing, which local investors cannot possibly compete with, the existing stock becomes severely underused. "By building high-quality public stock for senior citizens and by failing to examine other options," said Carter, "we are jeopardizing the private stock."

It is important when formulating policies and programs in these particular rural centres, said Carter, to look at options that address the present and future concerns and requirements of senior citizens in light of the existing and available private stock.

Kate Moffat, an analyst with the corporate planning division of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Commission, focused her remarks on an examination of the results of the 1989 Provincial Housing Needs Assessment, which looked at the housing problems and concerns facing families and individuals in rural Newfoundland.

In the summer of 1987, 4,000 questionnaires were delivered to different households across the province. Based on a 50 per cent response rate, data from 2,000 residents were used in the assessment. At the same time, eight public meetings, at which members of the public and people from various community organizations were invited to come forward and speak openly about their housing needs, were held across the province.

According to Moffat, the study clearly demonstrated an uneven distribution of needy households in Newfoundland. "Whereas one in 15 households in St. John's is in need," she said, "one in five households in communities of 1,000 people and less are in need of housing assistance."

This situation dates back to the beginning of settlement in Newfoundland, said Moffat. "In the early 16th century, people came to Newfoundland for one reason: to exploit the region's rich fishing grounds." Accordingly, three factors have influenced the pattern of settlement on the island portion of the province. First, with more than 6,000 miles of fertile coastline, pilgrims of the 18th and 19th centuries were able to use the most primitive fishing techniques by staying close to the resource. Second, with most harbours able to hold no more than 12 wharfs, people were forced to move along the coastline in their exploitation. And, third, as the number of settlers increased, people scattered along the coastline to spread out competition for the resource.

Other factors led people to settle in the more isolated and rugged parts of the province. "For more than 300 years," said Moffat, "people were discouraged from living in Newfoundland. Although 200 ships came annually from England to fish in the area, the ship owners and merchants did not want people to settle there."

Two official proclamations actually discouraged settlement. The fishing admirals' First Western Charter of 1634 gave the captain of the first fishing vessel entering a harbour the rights to the best fishing premises. Any settler living in that area could be forced to move or treated as badly as the fishing admiral wished. In the second proclamation (1675), King Charles II commanded the naval officers to send all Newfoundlanders back to England or ship them to the West Indies. "As a result," said Moffat, "people settled in the recesses of harbours, out of sight of naval officers patrolling the province."

"Affordability problems stem not just from an inability to pay for home renovation but also from shelter costs that are so high families are unable to meet basic household needs."

"While the incidence of homeownership is high in rural areas, there is strong resistance to mortgages and to loans. Thus, repair programs that require clients to take on a loan are not readily accepted."

According to Moffat, 1911 marked the zenith of rural settlement in Newfoundland. "There were about 1,400 settled places at that time, 95 per cent of which had populations of less than 500 and 60 per cent less than 100."

The cost of providing services to such a fragmented population is regarded as one of the main reasons the province was declared bankrupt in 1930, said Moffat. Since the 1950s, therefore, the government has initiated three resettlement programs. The first, in 1954, was a centralization program; the second, in 1965, was the Federal/Provincial Newfoundland Fisheries Household Resettlement Program; and the third was the Second Newfoundland Resettlement Program.

Eighty per cent of the people who did resettle in growth areas were able to do so within 45 minutes of their previous homes. Two hundred and thirty-four (or one out of every five or six) communities were completely evacuated. Today, there are 704 communities in the province of Newfoundland/Labrador.

"Historically, then, the province has been tied to a resource," said Moffat, "and, more often than not, tied to subsistence living. To complete the picture, we have the lowest per capita income in Canada and the second highest level of unemployment. It is reasonable to expect, therefore, that many people, especially those in rural Newfoundland, would have difficulty in finding affordable and adequate housing. For these people, affordability problems stem not just from an inability to pay for home renovation but from shelter costs that are so high families are unable to meet basic household needs."

In terms of the characteristics of a rural Newfoundland household, said Moffat, nine out of 10 are owner-occupied. Seven out of 10 households are married, and the average number of persons per household is 3.7. Fifty per cent of the surveyed respondents indicated high school as their highest level of academic achievement. Forty-two per cent had incomes of less than $20,000 a year. The two most important sources of income listed were employment earnings and unemployment insurance. At the time of the survey, 33 per cent of the sample were working full-time, 20 per cent part-time, and 10 per cent unemployed. In the rural areas of the province, the mean income was $26,000; in the province's three urban areas, the mean income was $40,000.

In terms of mortgages, 22 per cent of the people living in rural areas had a mortgage; 46 per cent of those in urban areas. On average, the monthly mortgage payment for a rural family was $350; for an urban family, $470. Heating costs were lower in the rural areas as many households heat with wood, a cost they do not figure in the estimates. Although it is generally less expensive to live in rural areas, there is an average income decrease of $14,000 from urban to rural areas.

According to the province's core housing need model, said Moffat, the point of entry is housing inadequacy with collapsed variables of a lack of facilities; major repair; and crowding. As well, if a family is paying more than 30 per cent of its income on housing and is within the core need income threshold, it is considered to be in need. Eighteen point six per cent of the people in the province are considered to be in need of housing assistance.

In general, the smaller the community, the greater the number of persons living in inadequate housing. The trend, quite clearly, is one of inadequacy by settlement size, said Moffat. According to building inspectors sent out to visit 200 of these homes, an average amount of $15,000 per home would be required to bring these buildings up to the "adequate" mark.

Despite the fact that only 10 per cent of the rural population uses rental accommodation, said Moffat, it is these households that experience the most severe affordability problems. Even so, with the exception of the urban areas, there is still a direct relationship between community size and the number of households paying more than 30 per cent of their income on housing. Sixty-three per cent of households in communities of less than 1,000 people have incomes below the established core need income threshold.

Rural housing need in Newfoundland/Labrador differs by nature and extent. The most pressing need, however, exists in communities of 2,500 persons and less. Often, existing housing stock is in need of major repairs, but income levels are just too low to encourage homeowners to make repairs. "And, while the incidence of homeownership is high in rural areas," said Moffat, "there is strong resistance to mortgages and to loans. Thus, repair programs requiring clients to take on a loan are not readily accepted."

Rural housing need, where adequacy is as important as affordability, is of a different dimension than urban housing need. The traditional emphasis on medium- and large-sized communities has meant smaller communities are less served. Flexibility is required to design housing policies appropriate for the rural portions of the province, said Moffat. "It cannot be assumed one program, such as the rural and native program, will meet all the housing needs of rural Newfoundland." Research clearly indicates adequacy and affordability are inter-related, and problems with housing adequacy are a direct result of low income. "Although people can afford to live in their homes, some consideration must be given to the condition of the homes in which they reside."

For these reasons, said Moffat, two key policy directions have been identified. The first concerns a client- rather than program-driven focus; the second, integrated housing. During the consultation process, it was discovered that many rural Newfoundlanders in need are not eligible for existing housing programs. In addition, research clearly demonstrated that many clients required services in addition to housing. "For example," said Moffat, "if we were to build a congregate housing development for seniors in rural Newfoundland, we would need the support of the Department of Health to provide care and the Department of Social Services to assist with operating costs. We need to work together. Clearly, current processes must be re-evaluated."

"The experience of single-parent families or families in general is now sequential. This does not fit in with our [country's] housing policies, which are designed as if family housing is something permanent over time."

The housing problems of rural singles was the focus of the presentation by Denise Piché, a professor at Laval University's school of architecture. Since there are "virtually" no articles on single-parent families living in rural areas, Piché elected first to use data obtained from Statistics Canada before embarking on an elaboration of a study she had conducted on single-parent families living in a rural area near Quebec City.

Citing the Stats Can data, Piché told the delegates that, up to now, urban studies have shown that single-parent families represent a high proportion of households and families in downtown centres — up to 30 per cent of families and up to 13 per cent of households in some downtown neighbourhoods.

But what is the situation for those single-parent families in rural areas?

"Our study dealt only with the Quebec City region, which includes 13 rural counties and the Quebec City metropolitan area.

"Single-parent families do not often dream of homeownership. ... What they need is rental and collective housing."

We also took a pilot county — the County of Portneuf — which includes 22 small municipalities," she said.

In the Quebec region, depending on the county, it was found that between 9.7 per cent and 12.9 per cent of families are single-parent families, while the Quebec metropolitan area has a proportion of 16.1 per cent.

This proportion varies from one municipality to another, especially in rural areas — one of the methodological problems encountered when dealing with rural areas, noted Piché, who said that a given proportion can represent over 50 families in some municipalities, while it could represent less than 25 families in others. "It is very difficult in some cases to reflect the actual situation because the number of single-parent families is so small," she said.

Between 1981 and 1986, the number and proportion of single-parent families has increased significantly in every county over this five-year period. Although this increase varies from one county to another, it is quite significant compared to the increase in husband-wife families with children. In some cases, said Piché, single-parent families have increased by 20 per cent or more, while husband-wife families with children have increased by about three or four per cent. "The number actually dropped in some counties."

Piché also discovered that, on average, single-parent families are much older outside the metropolitan area. Proportionally, less young women are family heads in rural areas, "and we find many women aged 55 and over (and this is particular to rural areas)."

This phenomenon, said Piché, can either be explained by separations and divorces occurring at a later age or by the fact that children leave home at a later age. However, it could also be due to the fact that Statistics Canada considers an older parent whose children are still living at home as a single-parent family.

Many factors could explain the higher number of single-parent families in the rural areas surrounding Quebec City, but the statistics do "paint a very different picture from what we know about single-parent families in cities, where the majority are young girls," said Piché.

Another discovery was that the proportion of female parents, and also male parents, who are active in the work force is very lov outside large centres — a phenomenon that could also be due to the age of single-parent families.

The study group's pilot region — Portneuf — is particularly affected by the lack of jobs for women, Piché said. Here, the participation rate stands at around 20 per cent for the entire female population, not only for women at the head of single-parent families.

Portneuf was the county with the least employment opportunities for women — there are no jobs offered to women. Up to now, this fact was never publicized.

Piché also discovered that, outside the metropolitan region, families headed by women in two counties have an income level in line with that of single-parent families headed by men. In this case, everything indicates it is the men who have a lower income and not the women, "who are advantaged compared to those in urban situations."

Explained Piché: "Unlike husband-wife families and male single-parent families, whose level of income is higher in Quebec City and fluctuates from one county to another, female single-parent families are poor everywhere. In this regard, there is as much poverty in cities as there is in rural areas. However, this is not the case for the pilot county, where men have a higher income and where women earn between 40 and 60 per cent only of the men's income."

As there are many more tenants in cities than in rural areas, Piché said that the study in Portneuf "lead us to believe that the situation of single-parent families in rural areas is completely ignored when it comes to planning and developing housing policies."

But statistics do not reveal everything on what it is like to be a single-parent family in a rural area or outside a large city. In terms of housing, urban and rural single-parent families share three characteristics. First, they are poor, so they are not well housed. This is because housing requires too much financial effort; "what is left in their budget practically drains what is left to cover their basic needs."

Second, housing is not only a matter of shelter. For single-parent families, housing also means living in an environment where they can have access to all the services and be near potential employment opportunities.

Third, single parenthood is not a permanent and homogeneous condition for all families. Quoting one of her assistants, Piché said, "The experience of single-parent families or families in general is now sequential. This does not fit in with our housing policies, which are designed as if family housing is something permanent over time, while the family becomes more and more mobile."

Fourth, for single-parent families living in urban and rural areas, there is increasing insecurity with respect to aging when women find themselves alone at the head of a family.

Rural life does not indeed seem to be well adapted for a number of characteristics specific to single-parent families. Piché believes there are nine difficult situations in terms of daily life for single-parent families to face — in addition to the difficulties specific to rural areas that are encountered.

The first difficulty, she explained, is that, when a single woman experiences a break-up in her relationship or gives birth, she often has to move. In a rural area, there is often social condemnation when a single woman gives birth. Another problem particular to rural areas is the obvious lack of hostels and transition houses. Very often, families who become single parents in rural areas have to move, sometimes to another community (something that is much less frequent in urban areas). Also, there is a lack of rental housing, which is generally the type of housing that single women with children will look for.

The second difficulty is the need for assistance and security at home. Single-parent families, whether following a break-up in a relationship or to survive normal life situations, need a lot of help at home because there is only one parent to take care of all the work. Also, single-parent families often face problems of violence from their ex-partners. In urban areas, these problems are minimized; in rural areas, due to the low availability of rental and collective housing, they are aggravated, said Piché.

The third difficulty is the availability of services for the children. Not only are these services scarce in rural areas, but also distance is really a major problem. Even if schools provide after-school care services, those services are generally located far from the families and, therefore, are not very accessible.

Regular daily services, such as grocery shopping, seeing the doctor, etc., are still scarce in rural areas and involve accessibility problems due to distance. In rural areas, accessibility to exceptional services is really difficult. For example, the people of Portneuf have to go to Quebec City for hospital services. "So, once again, there is a problem of distance, but a simple visit to the hospital also involves much more time than it would for someone living in an urban centre," she added.

"Research on the 'new' family has to start by providing a more accurate definition of the concept of 'family' in the Canadian census. Urban studies on the financial and economic capabilities of households should also be extended to rural areas."

"To revive the debate on housing, it is important that we complete the picture — family, property, and housing — by developing new forms of rental and collective housing."

Other difficulties also present themselves to single-parent families living in rural areas: scarce job opportunities; inadequate remuneration; distance from sources of employment; poor public transportation services.

"Single-parent families living in rural areas are more affected by living conditions because there is a scarcity of such things as community services and recreational facilities," said Piché. "Another problem we also encountered was the cost of telephone communications, which is often the last hope for people who feel isolated."

In rural areas, especially, "it is difficult to develop a reliable network of support services because of the low population density and the high cost of communications."

There is no doubt, stressed Piché, that the problems of daily life "are really aggravated" in rural areas.

From the perspective of single-parent families, there are probably too many housing actors and policies that are not adapted to their particular situation. Indeed, said Piché, current housing policies are not designed to meet the needs of single-parent families. She pointed out: "It should be noted that single-parent families do not often dream of homeownership. For them, housing does not mean an individual house, where they can be comfortable, isolated, and have some privacy. What they need is rental and collective housing."

Housing policies are also not well integrated. Hostels, where women usually go after the break-up of a relationship, generally fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs, whereas transition houses fall under the responsibility of two ministries — Social Affairs and Housing. Permanent forms of housing are governed by housing policies.

"A great effort of co-ordination is required," said Piché, "if we want to provide more flexibility for changing families. Research on the 'new' family has to start by providing a more accurate definition of the concept of 'family' in the Canadian census. Urban studies on the financial and economic capabilities of households should also be extended to rural areas, so that we can better understand the relationship between the cost of access to housing and other family expenses."

Living in rural areas is totally different from living in urban centres. Day care services, as they are designed in cities, are not as efficient in rural areas, especially for households who do not have private means of transportation.

With respect to policies and programs, Piché recommended three major directions:

- We should streamline the evaluation and the production of innovative projects, which would not be presented as universal solutions for the entire population but as a response to the specific needs of a particular community. In Canada, with the success of co-operatives and the number of single-parent families living in them, "it is hard to understand why it seems so difficult to experiment with housing models that would be more integrated and would help meet the concerns of families who want better accessibility to employment, services, and housing," remarked Piché.

- We should co-ordinate the work of all the actors in the housing arena.

- Senior governments, whether CMHC or provincial housing ministries, have an enormous task to achieve in heightening the awareness of municipalities, especially in rural areas, to meet family needs.

In Quebec, the Union des municipalités du Québec and the Union des municipalités régionales de comité, with the cooperation of the Secrétariat à la famille, are considering the creation of a municipal commission to deal with families, she said. "This is a first step, but, unfortunately, the statement of priorities proposed to municipalities does not focus on the fact that the family has many facets. It projects the image of a rather traditional family. Except for family violence, which is addressed very lightly, the document makes no mention of family needs in rural areas and, therefore, only reflects the situation in urban areas."

In conclusion, Piché stressed the following point: "To revive the debate on housing, it is important that we complete the picture — family, property, and housing — by developing new forms of rental and collective housing."

HOMELESSNESS: CONCRETE DEVELOPMENTS

LES SANS-ABRI: RÉALISATIONS CONCRÈTES

Discussion at this session revolves around selected local and provincial initiatives to combat homelessness that have been developed since IYSH. Who is involved? How well is it working? Can or should it be replicated? These and other issues were discussed by the participants.

Cet atelier traite des divers projets mis sur pied depuis l'AILSA, à l'échelle locale et provinciale, dans le but de faire face au problème des sans-abri. À qui doit-on ces projets? Les résultats sont-ils positifs? Peut-on ou devrait-on répéter l'expérience? Ces questions et d'autres ont été soulevées par les participants et participantes.

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When a group of women in the name of the Anglican church opened a little-used church hall in downtown Ottawa and invited women on the streets to sleep there, said Mary King, director of the Woman in Crisis Program of the city's Anglican Diocese, they knew nothing about homelessness, housing policies, systemic causes, and affordability issues. "As operators of the only day centre in Ottawa at the time, we reacted with compassion to a visible wrong. Every day, when that day centre closed, the 150 men who had been there during the day went to one of the two men's hostels in the city, and a handful of women went nowhere."

"This act of compassion," related King, "became the precipitator that transformed our thinking as a church from charity response to social justice. When the women got up from their cots in that barren hall and asked us, 'Where do we go now?', we began to look for answers."

"In 1983, on Christmas Day, our church — the archetype for the Christian church on shelter and homelessness — put women on the street. In two days, we went from an enthusiastic, caring group who simply saw a need and tried to meet it to one who realized that, in making a particular response, we were now part of a system that denied people access to housing."

It was soon decided the church would operate the shelter only until permanent housing could be secured. In the spring of 1984, King approached CMHC to find out what funding was available for housing homeless women — and found out there was none. "The man I talked to did not seem to understand what I was saying or what I wanted. He kept asking why the women were using our shelter. 'Are they disabled?', he asked. 'They have no homes,' I kept saying. 'We are disabled'."

Thus, the group entered the complex, confusing world of bureaucracy. Meanwhile, an increasing number of women came to the shelter each night, bringing with them needs the church could not hope to meet. "Women's groups in Ottawa ran ragged finding blankets, food, and toothpaste, holding bake sales to raise money for something that was inadequate at best, unjust at worst. And the Anglican church created not only a place for the women we served but a work ghetto for the women who served them."

In 1985, the group secured funds to purchase and renovate a 12-bed supportive home for the women of the shelter. By the time the home was completed, however, the number of women at the shelter had tripled. As no operating-cost funding was available for this type of home, the group was reliant upon the municipal hostel program for a level of assistance that was not nearly adequate for providing the kind of support required.

Once again, the church moved in to meet the need, finding the resources needed to meet a deficit that increased alarmingly each year. "A group of incredibly gifted and supportive women came together to run that home," said King. "Our hope was that, by introducing a new model of care, funding would become available. The model worked. The accolades poured in. But no funding emerged. Our workers became tired. They, too, wanted jobs that allowed them to live decently and afford adequate housing. But their salaries did not allow for that."

One of the greatest lessons learned by the group, said King, is that "inadequate operations equal more work. With constant staff changes and inordinate amounts of time spent in meetings and on fundraising, crisis management becomes a way of life. The issue of homelessness gets lost within the issues of the organization."

In 1986, King was invited to be a member of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Shelter for the Homeless for the Province of Ontario. Although she felt she knew little about homelessness and ways in which to alleviate it, King accepted, and saw some changes occurring, some new policies formulated. Things were happening. "Back home in the nation's capital, however, I saw women in need; little municipal response in terms of strategic planning; a tightening of by-laws designed to exclude certain people from housing; and no new groups forming to initiate projects to alleviate the situation."

As the group learned more about housing, its goals came into focus. In 1987, under a provincial program, the group applied for 20 units of supportive permanent housing for the women at the shelter. The request was granted almost immediately, and the group met with area Ministry of Housing officials to advise them "we did not know anything about developing housing."

"A group of incredibly gifted and supportive women came together to run that home."

"I believe if you feel something is right, not knowing how to do it should not stop you from doing it."

"I believe if you feel something is right, not knowing how to do it should not stop you from doing it," King said. "You can find experts in any area." Fortunately for the group, ministry officials helped find not only a housing developer but an organization, Centretown Citizens of Ottawa Corporation (CCOC), who agreed to build the housing and set it up, leaving the group to work with the women.

In this partnership, an organization with a particular area of expertise came together with an organization that had in its care a number of people in need of housing but no housing development skills. The development of that project has convinced King that, unless housing developers are inextricably linked to current shelter operations, people will remain homeless. "Unless all levels of government take some initiative on strategic planning with a goal to housing and not sheltering the homeless, [then] shelters will continue to flourish and inadequate and inappropriate solutions to homelessness will be perpetuated."

When the 20 women of the shelter are finally housed in this project, the church shelter will close. Yet, according to King, no other applications have been put forward in Ottawa for more housing of this kind. "Organizational transformation is emotional and difficult. Prohibitors of change lie in the rooted belief of many shelter operators that the homeless are only capable of shelter survival and that, if shelters are closed, shelter operators will go out of business."

"Sheltering is a political act; justice is a political leap," said King, "and I see the problem as a double-edged sword for municipal and provincial governments. Housing provision entails increased costs. There is, therefore, an economic interest in maintaining the shelter system of care and perpetuating the belief that some people are incapable of living in housing."

King encouraged the housing community to become more involved in the shelter community. "Your expertise as builders, as developers of models, as leaders in taking difficult projects into communities, and as experienced negotiators with bureaucracy is essential to organizations such as ours that want to provide housing but whose primary resources are program development and compassion."

One of the most critical issues in moving from a shelter to a home, said King, is in the area of program design and the support dollars necessary to develop appropriate models of care. "Housing ministries and housing providers must work more closely," she said, "not only with the community but also with supporting government ministries to ensure adequate support is provided to those organizations wishing to assist people in moving and in maintaining themselves in housing."

"Six years is a long time to put 20 units of housing in place, but for every night of those six years, I have gone home. The women of the shelter have lined up, gone in, showered, opened their one bag to check if their possessions are still there, and have left every morning to live for 12 hours in the nation's capital before they can sleep again. No one should allow this to be perpetuated — not the community, not the government, and surely not the church."

MaryAnn McLaughlin, research consultant for the Canadian Council on Social Development and chairperson of the session, added that the council's 1987 one-night shelter survey indicated there are approximately 400 shelters in Canada. At least 100,000 people use these shelters a minimum of once during the course

of a year. The struggle to get these people into permanent housing in Ontario has been made a little easier as singles are now eligible for social housing.

According to McLaughlin, Kerron Barnes, director of the Office of Community Development in Goshen, New York, is in the unique position "of having figured out how to make a perverse system work." Barnes, who agrees, believes there are other, more effective ways of executing housing development.

Orange County, New York, is a large suburb of New York City and the fastest growing county in the region. With a population of 289,000 people, Orange County incorporates three small cities and has a two million dollar budget with which to fund community development.

Although generally not involved in the delivery of programs for the homeless, by 1987, there were approximately 600 to 800 people homeless in the county at any given time, and the department became concerned with the alarming increase in the number of homeless families. After some investigation, Barnes found the leading cause of homelessness was forced eviction. His department began to look at the expensive system in place for dealing with the growing problem.

Under New York State law, the Department of Community Development is not permitted to pay the $600 a month rent required to place a family in an apartment. It can, however, said Barnes, pay $2,000 a month and put the family in a motel room, calling it emergency shelter. "So that is what we do. We put these families in motel rooms, and they might stay there for a year or more. We get very little for all that money we pay, and the families see no improvement in their living conditions."

The New York State Constitution also prohibits the department from engaging in any housing activities. While this slows Barnes down, "it does not," he said, "completely cut off our ability to do something." In addition, the department is not permitted to own rental housing. "In other words, we could not use the rent we now pay out for people receiving social service payments on an apartment building or a supply of housing owned by the county."

Under the department's Transitional Housing Program, two non-profit agencies purchase social housing units, which are then used by the Department of Community Development to beat the system. "The agencies go to the bank, obtain a loan for 90 per cent of the cost of a housing unit, and buy it," said Barnes. We then pay the rent we would pay into a motel into that apartment. As far as the government is concerned, we are putting out an emergency shelter allowance. The fact that the emergency shelter happens to be an apartment with a bedroom in it does not matter to them. We can make these payments for 18 months."

The program was initiated when the Department of Social Services approached Barnes to see if there was anything his department could do within the seemingly contrary system. Barnes, through a federal grant, was able to provide the non-profit organization with the necessary 10 per cent downpayment and all its closing costs through a zero per cent 18-month loan payable over a 24-month period. The mortgage is then covered by a monthly rent stream.

The most important element of this program, Barnes said, is you have an income or a cash stream for the homeless that

"If the IYSH activities accomplish nothing else, they force communities of all sizes to take a hard look at themselves and to acknowledge there are people on the streets."

"Having figured out how to make a perverse system work, [Goshen's Office of Community Development] beat the system [by developing what has been dubbed] the Adversity Through Perversity Program."

would normally be directed to shelter costs. "At $25 dollars per person per day, a family of three is eligible for $75 a day, or $2,400 a month. That is a tremendous amount of money, and you could probably buy something else with that besides a shelter room."

Under the program, the non-profit organizations buy the units and rent them to the department's clients for 18 months. "At the end of 18 months," said Barnes, "because we have paid a higher-than-usual rent, the non-profits can reduce the principal on their mortgages. Instead of an $85,000 or $100,000 mortgage, it might be a $25,000 or $35,000 mortgage. At that point, we have an apartment that we control, which is permanently dedicated to rent at $500 a month, with modest increases; an apartment that can afford to carry its debt service and operating costs with the rent is available from the social service payments."

The provision of housing is not the only goal of the program, however, added Barnes. The program really originated with the Social Services Department. An additional state grant, which includes such educational elements as remedial reading, substance abuse, child raising, and life skills, as well as job placement and even housing referral, provides a service component for the tenants. The non-profit organizations provide the services, and the department pays them out of the state grant on a monthly basis. While a typical rent with service payments added might initially be $3,000 a month, after 18 months it drops to $500. Over the long term, then, permanent housing will actually cost the department less money than the provision of emergency shelter.

The department also has a housing assistance payment system. If, at the end of 18 months, a tenant has not been able to find other, more permanent shelter and is still on welfare or social assistance, despite having participated in all the educational and training programs, the department can provide them with a rental assistance payment. The tenant is responsible for providing 30 per cent of their income for housing. The difference between that and the monthly $500 rent is covered by a federal grant paid on behalf of the tenant to the landlord. In other words, as long as a tenant is eligible for the program, he or she is guaranteed permanent housing.

Several features have been added to the program so it now resembles a Christmas tree, said Barnes. Being in older areas, some of the housing units are in need of rehabilitation. Through another program delivered by the department, the non-profit can receive a loan for part or all of the rehabilitation cost at zero per cent interest.

Under another key departmental program, building inspectors can be assigned to the non-profit organizations to assess potential purchases and determine what the associated renovation costs will be — if it has been legally converted, if it is suitable for the program, etc. Once construction or renovation is under way, the department can manage the operation with financial and minimal construction management assistance from the Department of Social Services. "The Department of Social Services has the money to provide an adequate cash flow, and we have the expertise to manage the construction, inspection, and acquisition phases of rental housing."

As a co-operative effort, it has been highly successful. Funding is highly cross-referenced, coming from four or five different federal programs, at least two state programs, private bank loans, and the department's loan fund. In addition, said Barnes, one of the non-profits has formed a subsidiary corporation to handle

construction and is registered as a minority contractor. The Transitional Housing Program — which should be called the Adversity Through Perversity Program, said Barnes — has made a considerable difference to Orange County's homeless population.

McLaughlin, acknowledging the perversities in the Canadian system, noted the embryonic work of the housing networking project of the Urban Core Support Network in setting up a foundation to help private non-profit organizations establish permanent housing for the hard to house. "In due course," she said, "the network hopes to be able to provide technical expertise, a resource service, and a level of operating or capital loan money."

Stereotyped or ready-made solutions to solving the problems of the homeless are not the answer, said Marie Audette, the director of Derniers Recours in Montreal, in her opening statement. "Recognizing our ignorance of this problem and the fragility of our actions is perhaps the beginning of wisdom."

Audette called on the delegates to not use traditional qualifiers to describe the homeless but to recognize certain, absolute facts. "These people have no shelter, they are hungry, they are cold, they are afraid, they are very ill, they have no family, they are barely surviving. In short, they are living in a state of extreme poverty that endangers their lives."

The notion of the disaster victim is useful for understanding, she said, the almost complete state of destitution and vulnerability of these people. In the case of a major disaster — fire, earthquake, bombardment — that would leave hundreds of thousands of disaster victims, authorities would have to act quickly to ensure the provision of water, food, clothing, and shelter. Specific public health measures would also have to be provided. In short, everything needed for survival.

"On this list, only water is universally accessible, free, and available in sufficient quantity. For the rest, the homeless are disaster victims just like any other citizen would be in the event of a major disaster." They need food, clothing, and shelter to survive.

Only the nature of the disaster, reminded Audette, distinguishes this population from other types of disaster victims.

Dernier Recours in Montreal exists for the purpose of providing assistance to the homeless population "through selective and minimal intervention at a time when they need it most to ensure their survival," said Audette. Created as a result of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, Dernier Recours was not designed to provide shelter, but it serves as a sleeping place for more than 12,000 people every year. About 100 people sleep on the floor each night, and close to 400 each month — "in addition to the hundreds of others who are housed on a daily basis in emergency shelters and homes provided by organizations responsible for the homeless in Montreal."

In only 14 months, said Audette, Dernier Recours has become the third major emergency shelter in Montreal. A recent survey conducted for the Government of Quebec by the Douglas Psychiatric Institute clearly shows the need for such a resource in a city such as Montreal, as well as its impact on the community. According to this survey, the average age of the clientele of

"The agencies go to the bank, obtain a loan for 90 per cent of the cost of a housing unit, and buy it. We then pay the rent we would pay for a motel room into that apartment."

"Instead of thinking the homeless are this way because of their own choice, it might be fairer to consider they are there because of a lack of choice."

Dernier Recours is 36; nearly 40 per cent are under 30. Seventeen per cent are no longer receiving social assistance benefits. In terms of housing, they are highly unstable: 30 per cent of the clients had no fixed address during the last year; 78 per cent have spent time in prison, with an average of 20 nights in prison or at the police station during the last 12 months; one out of three was hospitalized for an average of three nights.

"The homeless environment is dangerous, and those who are in it are likely to be victims of criminal acts. Thus, 41 per cent of subjects were victims of theft and shared the risk of being physically abused. To defend themselves against physical aggression and theft, 16 per cent say they carry a weapon. More than half avoid going to certain places, while 39 per cent make sure that they are in the company of people they can trust. Thirteen per cent say they sleep during the day to stay awake at night for fear of fire."

Moreover, more than 35 per cent of Dernier Recours's clients have a room or an apartment in the city centre. This, said Audette, is both extremely disturbing and revealing.

"Given that 40 per cent of the population of Montreal are people living alone, that one person out of five suffers or will suffer from mental illness in his or her life, that our city has the highest number of people suffering from AIDS, and that the aging of the population will soon become a major problem, corporations such as the Montreal Housing and Development Corporation must continue to help us meet these needs and develop the necessary tools," she emphasized.

Among Dernier's clients, 44.8 per cent meet mental illness and severe substance abuse criteria, while 43 per cent suffer from both mental illness and personality problems. This means, stressed Audette, that 88 per cent of the shelter's clients are experiencing severe psychiatric problems.

In terms of mental illness, however, the clientele of Dernier Recours differs from those in other referral centres. "We have more cases of schizophrenia, bipolar disorders, and personality problems; many more clients who suffer from some form of mental illness; and a very high occurrence of multiple problems."

Homeless clients suffering from mental health problems are in the worst state, and they are the most difficult to serve. Therefore, Dernier Recours has become the first link in an accessibility process for the most marginalized in society. Given this perspective, it is easy to say that Dernier Recours is "playing a role quite similar to street work."

Homelessness is the result of repeated individual failures and the accumulation of society's deficiencies. Indeed, a large proportion of these people were submitted to physical or sexual abuse during their childhood. Most of them have no family and were placed by social services. In addition, the education system has not succeeded in preparing them adequately for the labour market and for life in a technological society.

"Instead of continuing to think that the homeless are in this situation because of their own choice," Audette said, "it might be fairer to consider that they are there because of a lack of choice."

The solutions to homelessness are neither simple nor easy. Audette suggested that all of us "must be humble enough" to recognize that, for some, there is no other alternative to this way of living. For these people, the solution must be discrete, respectful, and minimal, while ensuring survival and dealing with emergencies and the unexpected. For most homeless, however, the solutions are multiple and diversified, and must be

applied at different levels and be well co-ordinated. "There is room for both individual solutions, inspired by private initiatives, and for community and collective solutions or those falling under the responsibility of the state or public assistance organizations involved in health or social services, income security, manpower, the police, or leisure."

One of the major challenges, said Audette, is to get every participant to be concerned about the situation of the homeless — and to co-operate with the other participants. To this end, the City of Montreal has paved the way by helping in the implementation of the Dernier Recours project: providing a building, paying the related costs, and subsidizing the operating budget. Last winter, a public foundation was created to meet emergencies. Roma-Dismat is offering Dernier Recours Montreal a $250,000 grant for the rehabilitation of our building, which will be handled by the Montreal Housing and Development Corporation, said Audette.

The Société d'habitation du Québec recently provided assistance for the purchase of equipment, and the Ministry of Social Affairs created a round table, "which will surely help in our development as an organization."

Should the experience of Dernier Recours be repeated?, asked Audette. Judge by its impact on the community. In 1987, at the Montreal morgue, 288 bodies were unclaimed, while in 1988, there were 117. Claiming that Dernier Recours had a direct influence in this decrease, Audette said that in Montreal's central metro stations, there were 74 per cent fewer arrests among the homeless. There has also been a radical change in police attitudes toward the homeless, she said, as well as a considerable decrease in judicial cases involving the homeless.

"In the shelter network, Dernier Recours has become the alternative for clients who cannot be accepted by any other organization. Since we started operating in January 1988, 177 students from all levels have come to Dernier Recours to gather information and observe. Three trainees worked with us to complete their masters' theses."

With increased awareness due to media coverage, said Audette, Dernier Recours can be assured that "political decision-makers can no longer ignore the sad reality of homelessness in our major cities."

An organization such as Dernier Recours is essential to welcome, evaluate, direct, and support the homeless in their search for services and help. The clientele of Dernier Recours receives a warm welcome and a minimal response. There is an opportunity for us to develop a personal relationship between the practitioner and the homeless person, and this relationship may lead to changes."

However — "and this is probably our major challenge" — the solutions provided by Dernier Recours and those involved with the homeless must be humanitarian "because Dernier Recours is the end of the line, the terminal. It is a last hope for giving the homeless the will to live."

"If the IYSH activities accomplish nothing else," said McLaughlin, "they force communities of all sizes to take a hard look at themselves and to acknowledge there are people living on the streets." What is particularly important in dealing with the problem of homelessness, she said, echoing Audette, is that public and private sectors and all levels of government work together in finding solutions.

"Political decision-makers can no longer ignore the sad reality of homelessness in our major cities."

Since IYSH, said McLaughlin, there has been some inter-ministerial discussion at the national level, and there have been attempts at the provincial level to formally organize communities in the prevention of homelessness. In Ontario, for example, some 21 Access to Permanent Housing Committees have been established in communities across the province. In New Brunswick, there has been an attempt to organize at both the community and provincial levels. With some support from the provincial Ministry of Housing, Habitation New Brunswick has attempted to set up local coalitions to look at their own communities and identify their housing, social, and economic needs and resources. A sustaining grant from the province should allow the group to continue its efforts at the community and provincial level to secure housing for the absolute homeless and those living in seriously inadequate conditions.

"Awareness [of homelessness] has helped to develop a willingness to share responsibilities in the housing sector."

"When we speak of concrete developments in New Brunswick since the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, I think that the awareness phase has helped develop a willingness to share responsibilities in the housing sector," said Leo-Paul Pinet in his opening remarks.

"There is no doubt that the provincial conference on housing, held June 1987 in Saint John, played a major role in initiating this willingness to take action. The conference made it possible to define directions to ensure effective follow-up and a common willingness to address needs," said Pinet, director of Le Centre de Bénévolat de la Peninsule Acadienne Inc. in Caraquet, New Brunswick.

The following five major recommendations emanated from the conference:

- policy development and review require consultation;
- access to centralized information is needed;
- must listen to the homeless and get them involved;
- develop legislation that meets United Nations standards; and
- public awareness has to be planned.

Another recommendation called for the establishment of a task force responsible for identifying housing needs province-wide and whose conclusions would be submitted to Cabinet.

Pinet went on to talk about recent changes in the provincial government — including the 1987 fall election, which brought the appointment of a new Housing Minister, the Honourable Peter Trites — that have helped to create a positive climate in the fight against homelessness. He cited as one example the creation of a provincial provisional committee that is working on heightening awareness among housing participants and developing mechanisms for the establishment of regional housing coalitions.

In addition, the Housing Minister made a decision in May 1988 to establish a housing task force that would be responsible for reviewing the New Brunswick housing situation. It would also act as a catalyst with respect to the changes that were and will be required by the new policy directions.

Commenting on the task force's mandate, Pinet told the delegates that Habitation Nouveau-Brunswick (alias Le Centre de Bénévolat de la Peninsule Acadienne Inc.), which is involved in 13 regions and speaks for many interest groups, is satisfied and "pleased to see the human approach" it adopted. The task force, he said, listened to the population and treated housing as a social element. "For too long, the New Brunswick Housing Corporation had refused to consider the socio-economic aspects of housing policies."

Returning to discuss his own organization, Pinet said that Habitation Nouveau-Brunswick is currently consolidating its structure and working on the development of an action plan for the short, middle, and long terms. Concretely, to help in the development of regional coalitions, a reference manual for non-profit organizations is being made available in the fall of 1989. The manual will also address the development and management of housing projects.

"Although our organization is relatively young compared with other member coalitions that have been active for 10 years," said Pinet, "as a group, we are willing to work for the well-being of the population. We also perceive this willingness from the housing corporation and the minister, but we need to perceive it from the New Brunswick government, the social services ministries, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the municipalities, and, particularly, the private sector."

No doubt, Pinet acknowledged, the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless has led to concrete developments in New Brunswick. "The heightened awareness among the population, governments, and the private sector seems to be producing positive results."

While the NIMBY syndrome will continue to plague housing activists, governments and communities are moving toward better, and planned, integration. In New Brunswick, where the majority of the population lives in rural areas and the rest in three major centres, we will have to optimize our possibilities, concluded Pinet.

Until very recently, said McLaughlin, information on homeless people was not gathered by Statistics Canada as part of the regular census of Canada. Data on street people, as well as those in shelters, however, will be collected for the 1991 census. Although this was not one of the Canadian Council on Social Development's top priorities in terms of homelessness, the availability of consistent, reliable, and regularly collected information is an important step forward and an indication of the growing awareness of the problem of homelessness in Canada.

Question and Answer Period

Q: I am interested at what point individuals would have to leave the apartments, Mr. Barnes. I assume people who are working poor would be eligible for them?

Barnes: The object of the program, believe it or not, is to try and get people so they are independent. We are hoping that approximately 50 per cent of the program participants do, in fact, function at some level autonomously. We realize this is a difficult population. The second goal of the program is housing: good housing and permanent housing. If persons successfully go through the program, participate in the training, and are employed, they may simply move out because their income would be enough that they could compete in our own rental markets. We would certainly work with them to do that. If, in fact, they were still homeless and receiving public assistance payments, then at the end of 18 months they would stay in the apartment until such time as they moved out for whatever reason. So they don't have to leave.

Q: In effect, they would negotiate with you, provided they had a low enough income, and they would have, more or less, security of tenure?

Barnes: Yes.

Q: But if they are successful and make a transition to having a regular income, they would be encouraged to move at that point to make room for other people?

Barnes: Yes, because obviously we are talking about 50 units of housing in this calendar year. It is not a large number. It will help

us get control of the families who are in motels with turnover. I mean, somebody may stay in there three months and be able to leave. Hopefully, we are going try to find apartments for these people. But if we can't, they can stay there. If we do find them an apartment where, with the combination of the housing assistance payments from the federal government and their own welfare payments, then they could move out.

Q: How are single parents with preschool children able to take the training program required of them?

Barnes: I am a little bit at a loss with this question because I am in the housing end of this program and the program is operated by the social services department. My understanding is the training programs will be provided on site. Now, when I say on site, I don't mean in that particular house because it is a two- or three-family house. In each case, they have a facility within the city where they can probably bring their children. Each of these non-profits operates a day care, so they could probably attend class and have their children right there. If you had a 20-unit building that you were doing this program with, you could simply offer it on site.

Q: I live in a Cityhome project in Toronto, and I am also involved in other non-profit and co-op housing in my neighbourhood. I was impelled to help out because I wanted to find out who is involved and how well the program is working. Well, it is not working. I have been involved in what started out as a completely singles' housing project, which has now changed to singles, ones, twos, and a few three-bedrooms. This is because is many of those people, once they get into a form of housing, start to think about what type of life they want for themselves. Some of them break off in couples; some of them have children. There is no proper progression from that type of shelter into permanent housing. In the latest non-profit in which I have been involved, we have allowed for bachelors, ones, twos, and threes, with a transition period built in as their lifespan changes. I would like to hear from other people whether they think this type of project is working. Do they have any suggestions on how to improve the situation?

King: I think I agree with you in terms of numbers. What I was saying is that 20 units over six years is minimal given the problem. I also certainly agree that when people do get into housing they can start looking at the other parts of their life. It is a real issue when you are developing singles' housing to build in where someone goes next. I think that, in our case (working with single people), there is no intention that what we are doing is going to solve the whole problem or for everybody. But as people develop themselves within that project and are able to move, those spaces will be freed up for other people who are starting out in a similar situation.

In terms of getting other groups involved, one of my biggest concerns is the low number of organizations and groups who are actually working on housing. In Ottawa, for example, in terms of the shelter population, there are no new applications in, and the timeframe for us, with the help of a very experienced developing body, to get 20 units in place is over two years.

Q: Mary, you said only 20 units of singles' housing have been produced in Ottawa over the last six years? Is this correct?

King: No, I said that, in the case of the Anglican Diocese, our goal of providing housing to the women has resulted in 20 units of permanent housing for that group, specifically for women.

Q: But in the City of Ottawa alone, City Living has produced close to 200 units of singles' housing; Options Bytown has recently produced 84 units of housing. And an interesting dilemma in the city right now: The housing authority has 5,500 senior citizens' units and we have a very low waiting list with low demand for that waiting list. Also, we recently had a study carried out to determine what to do with that housing stock in terms of singles' housing. With the provincial government's allowance of singles into public housing, we have well over a thousand people on our waiting list. And we are likely going through a conversion process very shortly, working with private non-profit groups where they will provide the services and we will provide the units. Something will be coming down the tube. There could be a significant number of units made available to groups such as yours.

King: I really appreciate that, but I guess what I was talking about was the support component for the group we are serving. That is still a major barrier for some of the people being able to access housing.

CANADA AND THIRD WORLD SHELTER

LA SCÈNE INTERNATIONALE: LES ÉTABLISSEMENTS HUMAINS

As a follow-up to the 1987 International Year of Shelter for the Homeless Conference, this workshop focuses on the potential for CHRA action on Third World and homelessness issues.

Pour donner suite à la Conférence à l'occasion de l'Année internationale du logement des sans-abri, les participants et participantes à cet atelier examinent la possibilité pour l'ACHRU de poser des gestes concrets au niveau du logement dans le tiers monde et de la question des sans-abri.

Yvo de Boer (Chair)
Chief, Information Services, Habitat
York University

Meyer Brownstone
Shelter for the Homeless Foundation
University of Toronto

Enrique Ortiz
Executive Secretary
Habitat International Coalition
Mexico City, Mexico

Daniel LeBrie
Canadian International Development Agency

Cassie Doyle
Acting Director, Department of Housing and Property
City of Ottawa, and
CHRA's representative on the Shelter for the Homeless Foundation

One of the purposes of this workshop is to try and take further the whole discussion on what CHRA should be doing in the field of international activity, commented Yvo de Boer, chief of information services for Habitat's Canada office, in his opening remarks.

CHRA has taken a number of initiatives in the past on international issues, including the co-sponsorship of the IYSH Conference in 1987. To date, CHRA has made a certain commitment to international issues. What further form that commitment should take is part of the focus of this session, *Canada and Third World Shelter*, de Boer said before commenting on CHRA's "Agenda for International Action", which sets out the history of the association's involvement in international activities. The document also outlines some initiatives completed since the IYSH conference and offers suggestions on possible routes for moving forward on the international housing front.

One such initiative that came out of the IYSH Conference was the establishment of the Shelter for the Homeless Foundation, on whose behalf Meyer Brownstone, a member of the board of directors, was speaking. Representing a coalition of Canadian NGOs that have been working together since 1987 in the area of awareness-raising, the foundation emerged really as part of two threads, he said. One thread focuses on the internal growth of concern for housing, particularly social housing in Canada, in the last several decades. This "internalization," said Brownstone, is characterized by a more intensive organization of base community groups of various kinds, by co-operative approaches to housing, and by social housing in the public sector involving the three levels of government.

On the other hand, this movement, process, or impulse has become internationalized, not simply to the existence of the same set of problems in the developed and developing worlds "but emerging as a general, universal kind of problem with very similar forms of responses."

In this way, "shelter as part of the social problem has emerged as an international crisis and focus."

But Canada's problem is defining and establishing the role Canadians are going to play at home and abroad as a way of understanding this problem and its treatment, said Brownstone, who surmised on the clear link between this sort of process and movement. "The more general concern throughout Canada for the issue of development is expressed in terms of not simply shelter, health, such things as human rights, and political empowerment but also in the terms of the problem of political poverty, which also tends to be universal."

The kind of consciousness that is emerging is not simply focused on the notion of aid. It is a simple proposition of "from Canada to you" simply because of the different material capabilities of Canada compared to the poor of the world, particularly in the developing world.

"What we are doing," said Brownstone, "should be placed in the context of not an isolated but a more general social phenomenon and of social issues that have universal dimensions, of which we are a part."

However, Canadians must understand that if they are to engage in this relationship or process, "although the general problems are universal and some of the general forums are universal, there is a great deal of diversity in local, national cultural, organizational, and political characteristics." These all must be understood and related to, stressed Brownstone.

Another emerging element is that these phenomena are not only worldwide. They are implanted in a particular, more clearly defined order. Explained Brownstone: "The recent budget is an explicit statement of Canada's identification with that growing and better-defined order, which brings with it some very crucial implications for sectors, groups, and regions within rural society. This makes it more urgent to organize and represent the interests of a now more clearly defined sector of human society, which we often talk about as the poor or the dispossessed in terms of political power or whose rights are being violated daily. The last budget of the Canadian government indicates that Canada is joining very explicitly, not only externally in terms of a foreign aid thrust but in terms of its internal image of what Canada was or should be."

For those of us concerned with housing as a human right, with equity if not equality, and with social justice concerning housing,

"[The shelter problem] is emerging as a general, universal kind of problem with very similar forms of responses."

"Shelter as a part of the overall social problem has emerged as an international crisis and focus."

we have been clearly identified in a oppositional position with regard to this image and Canada's explicit adherence to it. "So, if we are to carry on our mandate of achieving social justice in housing in particular and in settlements generally, the Canadian government would benefit if it were to define more clearly what our task is and develop a clear approach to this problem."

A second important consideration, said Brownstone, is that, within Canada's housing and settlement sectors, there has been remarkable development in the past decade of a constituency "characterized by the group in this room and at this conference generally." Evidence of this growing constituency is the development of base activities — the co-op movement or specific housing federations — national organizations, such as CHRA, and international groups, such as HIC and the United Nations. Brownstone also acknowledged the efforts of the Canadian government through policies developed via the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), and the International Development Research Corporation (IDRC).

"Organizationally, in terms of potential for doing something within this field, there has been remarkable, constructive development in Canada," said Brownstone.

Having provided a general background in which the Shelter for the Homeless Foundation has been implemented, Brownstone then talked about specific developments. Immediately prior to the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless conference in 1987, a session in Ottawa was convened by the Canadian Council for International Corporation (CCIC) and Rooftops, in which 70 people addressed the possibility of Canada's response to the United Nations' call that particular attention be paid to the issue of human housing and human settlements. Out of this session emerged the idea of forming a Canadian coalition, which was essentially viewed as a mother group for bringing together the housing-specific activist non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In addition to housing experience, many of these groups, said Brownstone, brought to the coalition considerable international experience: They brought a wealth of knowledge about dealing in and with developing countries; and they brought a lengthy connection with the Canadian government through CIDA.

The perception was that such a coalition was the "most effective" way for Canada to proceed. The specific action to grow out of that coalition was to form a charitable organization called the Shelter for the Homeless Foundation. Incorporating members were the Co-operative Housing Federation, Rooftops Canada — the development arm of the Co-operative Housing Federation — OXFAM Canada, and two planning consultants. Very quickly the membership was enlarged to include the Canadian Institute of Planners and CHRA.

"In terms of membership and direct commitment and responsibility," said Brownstone, "the coalition is growing beyond the rather limited group that formed it originally to now include: Development Workshop, a development consultancy working in Africa and Asia; Shelter Unlimited, consisting of individual staff members of CMHC who want to develop among themselves a particular interest in development issues abroad; Royal Architectural Institute of Canada; Horizon Development Foundation; Canadian Real Estate Association; Canadian Home Builders' Association; Northwest Territories Housing Corporation; Save the Children; CUSO; Match International, a women's international development group; and Canadian Co-operative Association."

The coalition's mandate, which is purposefully tentative and open in order that modifications or extensions can be made, contains three elements. The first element has to do with development education in Canada focussed on housing and human settlements but designed to heighten Canadian consciousness about development. This is because "the Shelter for the Homeless Foundation is not addressing itself simply to development problems in the developing world but as a universal problem with elements in Canada and abroad — providing a basis for a common concern and common focus in Canada and abroad. We feel that the whole issue of housing as a development phenomenon needs expanded concern and understanding in Canada, so one of our main strategies is to engage in development education in Canada."

The second major element is to improve the capacity of existing housing structures in Canada to deal with development issues "once the development itself becomes defined by all of us."

The third element is to engage in programming, with the main focus on the developing countries. The foundation believes the way to address the problems in the developing world is not to simply focus on the Third World but to understand these problems as being mutual between Canada and the developing world. "Part of the strategy of engaging Canada and the developing countries," said Brownstone, "is through the medium of specific projects, such as giving demonstrations as a form of learning experience, to develop a greater degree of understanding between Canada and the developing countries — to form a concrete basis for a communication process as distinct from other possibilities, such as more abstract discussions about housing problems and rights in housing."

Brownstone added, "With a [particular] project, you have a very concrete experience in gauging not only the physical, planning process of developing human settlements but also the organizational, social, political, and cultural aspects of these developments. Through project activity, we hope to develop this rather broad understanding."

However, the shelter coalition does not see itself as an organization having projects. Its intent, said Brownstone, is not to become a project organization but to engage the more competent and more currently active development organizations in undertaking the actual project work.

In the last year or so, seven projects have been developed overseas, all with another NGO as the active project partner. The Shelter for the Homeless Foundation has served as a facilitator, as an identifier of projects. For example, in Santiago, Chile, a project was developed by a local housing group called Tecaro, which relates directly to CUSO, the Canadian body. In Jamaica, a women's construction collective project is working face to face with the Save the Children Canada.

"Our involvement in projects as facilitators and making use of the project experience is so we can develop good understanding within Canada of the housing development phenomenon abroad," said Brownstone.

In conclusion, he said that one can stand back from all of this and note the tremendous degree of organization relating to housing and settlements issues that exists in Canada. "But what is lacking in Canada is not the organizational capacity to carry on development and human rights projects but the wherewithall to focus on the specific issue of housing. Housing, after all, is last in a long line of crisis areas, internationally and domestically. It is far down a line that starts with other things, such as health and hunger."

"What is lacking in Canada is the wherewithall to focus specifically on the issue of housing. [Unfortunately,] housing is last in a long line of crisis areas; it is far down a line that starts with other things, such as health and hunger."

"Housing has emerged as one of the last specific concerns. If we are going to do something effective in this area, we're going to have to devise some kind of focussing mechanism. Those of us involved in shelter view this as our major responsibility, having recognized that we are working within a complex [situation]. We aren't organizing ourselves to duplicate but to reinforce and provide a focus on this particular issue — in terms of material progress and in terms of non-material progress — to deal with the issues of rights and housing as part of that complex of human problems."

"Partnerships with governments and housing authorities are giving new dimensions to NGOs. A new and important innovation is the building of coalitions and understanding coalitions in a very different way than as only networks."

To give delegates an international perspective on how non-governmental organizations or professional associations are trying to approach shelter issues, Enrique Ortiz was invited to speak. Ortiz, secretary general of the Habitat International Coalition, a worldwide network of about 250 community-based organizations dealing with shelter issues, is well placed to provide such an overview.

"I question first how much of this problem is a political question because housing is a growing problem," said Ortiz in his opening remarks. "Almost one-fourth of the population of the world lives in almost precarious conditions or is absolutely homeless. There is a global strategy designed to provide shelter for these people by the year 2000. The document considers its enabling policies to be the fundamental way of achieving this goal."

Conceding that not all the responsibility has to be given to government, Ortiz said all of us can profit from the experience of NGOs all over the world. The main point is to encourage and facilitate the shelter production efforts of these groups.

Recently in Cartagena, Columbia, two reports were presented, with the first talking about the capabilities of government and non-government sectors in the field of human settlements and the potential and energy of NGOs to meet the demands of the poor. It recognizes also very specifically, for the first time, a community sector. The other paper was concerned with the implementation and monitoring of the global housing strategy.

"Enabling policies incorporate free work to the tasks of development, not only for reasons of economy but also because they provide an opportunity for people to decide on their own housing and living environments — a more democratic process."

They also, said Ortiz, make it possible for people to give expression to their cultural values in housing. "This is very important at this time when we are standardizing life throughout the world." Such cultural expression is needed, said Ortiz, because it provides richness.

From the NGO experience, this brings the issue to a political level and displays much of governments' and technocrats' fear of losing control, said Ortiz. It also brings the question of political challenge that NGOs must face "to open spaces of autonomy and ensures social control of the housing process. If they want to bring prices down, they have to control the process — and this sometimes means interests against the position."

Enabling policies for "our people" provide not only an opportunity for solving the shelter problem but for participating fully in decisions to organize, build direct fronts with democracy, and open new spaces for negotiation and autonomy within a social context. Although feasible, said Ortiz, such an approach poses some substantial questions for the future. As NGOs prepare to meet shelter programs at a massive scale, it is possible to consolidate, expand, and multiply the NGO movement.

In the last 25 years, NGOs have grown significantly, having arisen in support of the urgent needs of the masses of ordinary people, particularly in developing countries. In some regions more than others, for example, in South Africa, they have not developed to a great degree, but in Asia and Latin America, it's a different story. In Africa they still need to organize and integrate.

"These organizations have met many obstacles and limitations, yet in many cases they have gone beyond what we thought they could do," said Ortiz.

HIC's book on building communities presents a wide range of possibilities and ways of approaching the housing problem. Outside the traditional ways of doing things, NGOs are working in a different way and using a different professional approach. This, said Ortiz, has generated some common problems: "The reaction of many country's governments is to regard them as potentially superior, while some countries don't let them organize. Frequently, the funding criteria is coming from outside forces to some kind of practice. This kind of practice has made the NGOs in our countries little, disintegrated organizations focused on specialized issues. They are having to compete for resources inside and outside their countries."

"So what we have in the Third World is dispersed NGOs that are taken out of practice, and thousands of isolated micro-projects that have been developed by multiple NGOs working in different fields of activity. There are NGOs working on health, housing, educational training, legal assistance, popular culture, alternative and applicable technologies, small business and commercial development, family planning, ecology, crops, nutrition, sports, women, handicraft development, alternative medicine, even esoteric practices — all little things disconnected between themselves and the result of many years of work." This means, said Ortiz, there is little strength and little internal integration.

Nevertheless, the work of funding agencies and NGOs has provoked a different way of thinking in many countries. There are now very strong social movements and very strong grassroots organizations, which are developing within their movement a more integrated vision of the world — "not this isolated way of saying things."

Ortiz told the delegates of popular movements in Mexico dealing with housing, services, education, culture, and family planning all at the same time. In some ways, they are now cultivators of their own development.

One problem of popular grassroots organizations, especially in housing, is that "they learn a lot, but when they finish the housing, they forget a lot." According to Ortiz, unlike NGOs, these grassroots groups are not accumulating experience. "Therefore, we have to ensure that NGOs' experiences can also be kept in the new process, in the new approach."

New approaches are being cultivated at different levels. For example, explained Ortiz, the creation of networks was the first step in the NGO movement. "These partnerships with governments and housing authorities are also giving new dimensions to NGOs. A new and important innovation is the building of coalitions and understanding coalitions in a very different way than as only networks. Networks are for the interchange of information and experience, but coalition means something more. It means solidarity links and solidarity concepts among its members."

As an example of one organization assuming a different approach, Ortiz talked about his own association. Habitat

"Coalition means something more [than networks]. It means solidarity links and solidarity concepts."

"The main objective of coalitions should be to make as favourable as possible the development of locally determined and self-managed settlement programs."

International Coalition changed its traditional approach, organizing in a different way after the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. In addition, many more Third World organizations came to join HIC, changing their venues or place of their secretariats to a different country. HIC even changed its own name from council to coalition. Of significance is that, while HIC has at least 12 years' experience, some of its members have 25 years' experience.

HIC is committed to fighting for the recognition and achievement of housing as a human right, including the right for people to be free from forced evictions. Two of the main programs derived from this thrust are to strive for the recognition of community-based organizations and NGOs as key actors in this process and to promote enabling policies, which are also enshrined in legal, financial, and administrative frameworks. HIC exists to promote solidarity among its members, as well as among people anywhere who are struggling for their housing rights, and to build alliances with like-minded social movements working for peace, dignity, and sustainable development.

It is HIC's belief that NGOs are able to carry out these strategies more effectively if they are well organized on a local, regional, global, and national scale. They must be able to speak as one voice to the public, authorities, and international organizations; they must be able to present technical, organizational, and administrative solutions concerning the construction, maintenance, and planning of housing in neighbourhoods.

The main programs HIC is developing as a second-level organization (because its members are working at the grassroots level in two main aspects) include research and enabling programs and forced evictions. HIC also conducts programs dealing with women's shelter and support for the homeless in industrialized countries.

"Enabling policies," said Ortiz, "should not result in the withdrawal of government from having responsibilities in the human sector. Proposed coalitions should be with community-based organizations and non-governmental organizations, as autonomous organizations will not be compromised. The main objective should be to make coalitions as favourable as possible for the development of locally determined and self-managed settlement programs."

In conclusion, Ortiz said that the efforts of organizations in all countries "should be linked" in order that the housing programs being offered in Third and First World countries are strengthened.

Providing a different organizational perspective — on the operational side — Daniel LeBrie discussed the funding that the Canadian International Development Agency provides for international housing projects. Funding is granted under four different programs: bi-lateral, multi-lateral, industrial corporations, and special programs.

Under the bi-lateral program, development activities are decided between governments and not so much by NGOs. While it is difficult for organizations such as CHRA to access this type of funding, it can be done — albeit rarely done — if local governments list housing settlements as a high priority and make it part of an agreement with the Canadian government.

With respect to the Castrianos project in Columbia, LeBrie told the delegates that CIDA at the time was trying to develop a new

concept called the Country Focus Concept. Its basic premise was that, whereas the bi-lateral program had been used to plan their projects in a bi-lateral way, CIDA was invited to investigate other mechanisms for delivering assistance to the countries. "As a result, planners were encouraged to think not only of bi-lateral agreements between the Canadian government and recipient governments but about involving, for instance, the Canadian NGO community. In this context, CIDA's Columbian section was interested in developing institutional co-operative activities in Columbia."

When an ICDS officer was sent to Columbia to identify possible activities in Columbia that might be developed between local and Canadian institutions, one program, which would involve the Castrianos project, became an umbrella organization for servicing close to 500 or 600 housing co-ops in Columbia. The project was to set up Castrianos over two or three years. Close to a million dollars was channeled from many sources.

According to LeBrie, Castrianos may serve as a model for future housing settlement activities in developing countries. However, the Castrianos experience is probably unique since, said LeBrie, most of CIDA's bi-lateral programs are not concerned with NGOs or the institutional co-operation program.

The second delivery channel, the multi-lateral channel, is a branch of the program where funds are sent directly to international institutions, for instance, UNICEF, or regional banks.

A third channel is the industrial co-operation program, which was started just a few years ago and has developed "to the point that, where all CIDA budgets are or will be cut this year, this program will be increased by 20 per cent." As with the second option, this channel of funding is not open to the NGO sector.

The fourth possible channel includes the special program branch, under which a number of programs fall. It is truly a multi-faceted program, said LeBrie.

The 150 or so NGOs are receiving funding from the NGO program, one of the larger programs offered within the branch. "The main feature of these organizations is that international activities are their main purpose. They also have a fund-raising capacity, with CIDA providing matching funds to the funds they raise from the Canadian public."

Another large program within the same division is the ICDS program. ICDS stands for Institutional Corporation and Development Services: Development service refers to volunteer organizations, such as CUSO, while institutional corporation includes a number of smaller programs catering to diverse organizations, including co-ops, labour unions, colleges and universities, and professional associations.

For CHRA, a number of funding channels might be feasible. "If you are a housing co-op, maybe some funding could be obtained from our funding program. However, the most probable source of funding would be the small program I am in charge of — the professional association program."

Under this division, funding is given not only to the strictly professional groups, such as the Canadian Bar Association, that monitor and control a profession. It is also given to two other groups: the professional association not necessarily included in the first grouping, for instance, the Canadian Public Health Association, which provides services to its members but is not a professional association; and "the misfits," those organizations that did not fit elsewhere in CIDA's programs.

"As discriminatory as the term may sound, there is a great advantage in having a place for misfits in my program because it

"We can learn a lot from the kind of organizing that is going on in the NGO sector in the Third World and other countries."

"We're out of sync with what is happening. By becoming more international in our concerns, we raise the importance of housing, both for the development of individuals and for the development of communities."

allows a great deal of flexibility and the possibility of attempting new things," said LeBrie. "The advantage is that we can try new things in the program, although the door is not large by CIDA standards. My program budget last year was roughly $3.5 million to share with over 30 organizations."

To illustrate what types of projects get funding, LeBrie provided an example of what the program will not fund. The Shelter for the Homeless Foundation approached CIDA with a program proposal and asked for feedback. CIDA could not oblige for several reasons, including the fact that CIDA "is not used to moving too fast in regard to program funding, preferring instead that institutions applying should develop a report. We prefer also that a certain volume of activity — in excess of $400,000 worth of projects a year— be generated before providing core funding. Adding to the difficulty was that those identified as partners to the foundation then belonged to diverse groups that were not necessarily misfits (some of them would have been NGOs, some universities, or professional associations)."

In discussing the issue of funding for CHRA, LeBrie said the only possibility would be if CHRA's work overseas was done on a project by project basis. This work could either be conducted by dealing directly with the organizations who submit proposals or indirectly, such as CHRA receiving projects from its member organizations and submitting them to CIDA — or the Shelter for the Homeless Foundation receiving projects from developing organizations "but dealing first on a project by project basis with us."

"The door is small, but it is open. My branch's purpose is to try to assist organizations as much as possible, not to discourage new initiatives," concluded LeBrie.

Going into the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, CHRA made a decision later articulated through the "Agenda for International Action" that came out of IYSH. This decision, said Cassie Doyle, the acting director of the City of Ottawa's department of housing and property, was that Canadian support for housing development in Third World countries complements CHRA's work here in Canada.

As background, when Barry Pinsky from Rooftops Canada approached CHRA in 1985 when planning for IYSH was under way, his main interest was to focus on Third World shelter activities. This was probably the first time that the CHRA membership started to think about this subject. "By bringing the Rooftops proposal into the IYSH program, Barry played a leadership role."

CHRA decided there isn't a conflict between domestic and Third World shelter activities, and this position was adopted in the "Agenda for International Action".

CHRA was a co-sponsor of the IYSH Canadian Conference, along with the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW). Through its partner co-sponsor, CHRA was fortunate to receive a substantial grant from CIDA for undertaking a Canada Study Program for housing leaders in Third World countries. Those housing leaders were primarily from non-governmental organizations — the criteria that we established through our working group — because we thought we could garner more expertise from the Third World and link up better with our members through non-governmental organizations, said Doyle. Approximately 75 individuals participated in that study program: They came for the conference and spent six to eight weeks either

before or after. Working along with and visiting with different housing corporations, co-operative groups, and social organizations in Canada with an interest in housing, these individuals were placed across the country.

According to Doyle, "this entire event was a turning point for CHRA because it was the first time we really had exposure to the issues. Exposure came through the conference, where we had some excellent speakers from the Third World and the United Kingdom address the issue of shelter activities. As well, many of us across the country were fortunate to have individuals in our housing corporations, asking us questions, sharing their experiences, and telling us what they were doing in their own countries. From that point, we had undertaken as an organization to become part of the Shelter for the Homeless Foundation, which is coalitioned with other NGOs and groups."

Conceding the importance for CHRA to now figure out its next step, Doyle stressed that the "Agenda for International Action" lays a platform for the kind of work CHRA could undertake in the area of development education, support for Third World shelter activities, and policy development or policy monitoring research.

"But what is truly important now is for us to start to discuss a more concrete plan that fleshes out this document. We need to set up our own agenda in terms of international focus, and particularly in Third World activities."

To illustrate her point, Doyle went on to cite a recent experience she had. In a discussion with representatives of NGOs from the Third World, it came out that "in order for us to set up partnerships with them, we need to know where we're at. That's what they were challenging Canadian organizations to do: to examine our motives and have our own agenda so we know why we're participating in this activity."

What's really in it for CHRA to take on an international role in Third World shelter activities? asked Doyle of the delegates attending the session. "If we're not clear about that going in, then we will not give it the attention it deserves. Having been the intermediary between the Shelter for the Homeless Foundation and Rooftops Canada and CHRA, I say that now is the time for the decision. Are we going to do this? If we are, then we should put together a concrete plan and start to do it. We've been going at a fairly low level of activity. As an organization, this is a very serious endeavour. We have to give some consideration as to why we want to do it and what's in it for our own membership."

Outside the whole issue of globalization of some of the issues that will be facing CHRA in developing affordable housing in Canada, Doyle pointed out the other side benefit to CHRA taking on an international flavour — the mutuality of interests with organizations and other groups around the world. "There is a real potential for learning on the part of CHRA's membership by becoming involved and making some linkages with non-governmental groups in the Third World. Many of us were struck yesterday by hearing Jim Green talk about the evictions surrounding Expo in Vancouver a couple of years back, and the potential for more evictions with the future development of the Expo site. And we heard Enrique Ortiz talk about these very things that are happening in Korea and Santa Dominico — what Jim calls Hallmark events."

This type of sharing of information, said Doyle, could prove fruitful. "Enrichment is definitely there. There's a lot we can learn from the kind of organizing that is going on in the NGO

Question and Answer Period

Q: IYSH was a growing experience for this organization and probably the event that propelled us into a whole bunch of major NGO positions in the Canada. The "growing" came in two forms. One was the revelation by a lot of our members that there was something we could contribute — organizationally, technically, and otherwise — to colleagues facing a lot of the same problems all across the world and in our own Third World, most of which lies north of here. The second was the awareness there is a another world out there and that there's much we can learn. CHRA has tried for three years to make the coalition work; why it hasn't been able to must be examined.

While I hadn't thought very clearly about the resuscitation of member skills in a practical sense, this is a good point. We tend to do everything at arms' length, one reason being that in this country we seem to have a notion that government shouldn't be too big. Therefore, we try to reduce the overhead of government by building good contract administrative organizations. This model has been effective in dealing with some of the urban problems, and it may or may not be transferable.

From an individual growing experience, yes, I think Cassie's on to something. From an organizational perspective, I suspect also that since CHRA is gaining strength, it may be in the position to marshal some Canadian resources. It does have some credibility in goverment and non-government circles in Canada as a focus for housing-related health issues and social development issues tied to the housing field. To go a step further, in your first bi-lateral category, Mr. LeBrie,

if there were cities in this country who want to be involved in sponsorship programs and support, that may be a lever for CHRA to get involved? For instance, there are cities in this country with very positive and tangible links with other cities. The City of Toronto has partnership agreements with cities in Brazil and China, and is developing similar linkages with other countries.

LeBrie: We're talking about agreements between the Canadian government and local governments. In the case of the City of Toronto, their program is supported by management with funding from the special projects branch. This is a program of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. I would feel that the bilateral source is rather unreliable.

Q: The general point I was making is that CHRA has a fair standing with the regional municipalities in this country: Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver. There may be something there in terms of leadership, particulary with those cities themselves of developing some real linkages with Third World countries.

LeBrie: CIDA's management funds is via the federation and not individual municipalities.

Q: Even if the municipalities are matching?

LeBrie: I think if CIDA is using a standard procedure with regard to the co-ops or the trade unions or the universities or the municipalities, their preferred channel is the federation.

Q: You speak about our being able to give expertise, but is there a demand for this? Is our supply being matched by the demand?

sector in the Third World and other countries. [In addition], there is a real advantage to put our own members' technical skills to use. We have a fairly high level of technical expertise in our members, some of which is not being challenged anymore in Canada because our development processes have become fairly easy. We don't get the actual hands-on opportunities to use the decades of experience in housing that many of our members have."

Doyle also stressed the enrichment of such a co-operative venture for CHRA as an organization and for housing as a relevant issue.

"One big eye-opener for many of us in the Canadian housing scene who were working on the IYSH Conference," said Doyle, "was the very low priority accorded to shelter activites by our Canadian need agencies and non-governmental organizations. Both for major NGOs and for CIDA, housing issues related to urban issues have received a very small proportion of their budget, their attention, and their focus. All you have to do is listen to what the figures say in terms of increasing urbanization to realise we're out of sync with what is happening. By becoming more international in our concerns, we raise the importance of housing, both for the development of individuals and for the development of communities."

CHRA must not only develop an action plan, but it must also integrate more international sessions in its annual symposia. "We must, therefore, establish within CHRA some kind of international committee to address these two items first and foremost," said Doyle.

A: There is no question that there is a training demand and a technical advice demand, but it has to be tailored to the nature of the demand and how these forms of support are going to be used.

A: Normally, it isn't usually a direct transfer. But we know how we behave in terms of our work. Going into a situation in a developing country, there has to be an adapted application of our knowledge and our practices to the conditions and possibilities there.

A: You're familiar with CUSO, which is based on precisely that type of demand pattern. Its whole program has been based on satisfying the demand for resources to build organizations and to carry on certain material projects — not the kind of demand the NGOs face, which is for technical advice or training.

Q: Who expresses the demand, and how do we hear about it? What is the linkage between the demand and the supplier?

A: In the case of our Carabongi housing project where shelter was linked with a Kenyan co-operative for the construction of housing through our co-operative, the initial contact was in terms of the material requirements we've had to add to the bundle of resources they've assembled themselves. And they needed additional funds. So the initiative was based on a requirement of resource funding. But the moment that project began, the group itself, the indigenous group, began to express needs for technical training — and everything that goes with an organization that may not be perceived in the first blush of trying to do something about housing. That was a very practical consideration, and that's the way that demand arose. It was satisfied by shelter turning to the additional housing co-ops. It then provided the technical assistance they needed.

Q: In that instance, did they approach you, or did you hear about it?

A: They appoached us.

Q: Because you were known internationally as a co-ordinator of the supply?

A: There is a network called Settlements Information Network we were quite plugged into through IYSH. A number of their reps were here through the conference and represented Habitat International Coalition. This network is available so that they would have contacts if they have a project that needs material resources.

Brownstone: The contacts are made in very different ways. The NGOs, for example, or an NGO such as OXFAM, have permanent offices in many places and simply receive requests from a whole range of local groups for assistance on particular projects. Sometimes they have technical problems, which are usually referred to CUSO. CUSO will then provide a co-operant who will work on a project OXFAM has been funding and give technical assistance. But all of this is generated by the indigenous groups.

Q: We had a member of your international committee from NAHRO, Joan Rogers, meet with us in our networking session. I was wondering if you would comment on the focus of that international committee. It hasn't addressed the Third World housing component to much extent. Do you see that as being a problem?

A: NAHRO has approved a resolution that affects Congress, which is our favourite place to go with our mandates since they have the resources. The larger share of development resources that are made available by the federal government should go to shelter and to community development. We've since supplemented that by adding that they should provide assistance and increase assistance to implement the global shelter strategy as passed by UNCHS and approved by the US Assembly. In working with the congressional committees and individual members, I have put a lot of emphasis on the strategy, which provides the actual program. The implementation of the strategy is what it's all about. And the strategy is a very broad statement that isn't just limited to infrastructure of shelter but also to the institutional arrangements necessary to make these programs function. They are also address the basic capabilities of Third World countries to develop and to address the whole issue of economics, sustainable economic development, and, to a certain extent, environmental issues. It is a fairly wholistic document — in my judgement, the best part.

I have taken the same resolution, which basically cites numbers as they relate to homelessness and urbanization in developing countries, with the result being a bigger share of our resources ought to go to community development and shelter. The American Planning Associations is for this. I have to say that at every instance there are people who stand by and ask why we are getting involved since we've got enough problems of our own. We are short on resources. As a matter of fact, domestic programs in the last eight years have been cut probably by 60 per cent, even by 70. Every year for eight years, the Reagan Administration has tried to eliminate our housing programs and the mass transit program. But as it turns out, they didn't really mean that they didn't want to help developing countries.

Q: The issue of the national organization using resources to promote a broader conscience in the Third World or anywhere else is a useful endeavour. One of the reservations I have is the presumptiousness of having technical expertise. I'm not sure of the degree of skills that we really have to offer because everything that exists here doesn't exist at all or only in fragmentary ways in the Third World. In fact, the Third World may be able to offer us more.

A: The housing and human settlements field is a very weakly developed area of exchange of technical help or training. That is what the Shelter for the Homeless Foundation is going to provide, it is hoped.

Q: Cassie, one of your ideas was to raise the profile of housing and human settlements. Certainly, through the strategy for shelter, there is an opportunity to do that. The enabling strategy talks very strongly about private, public, and NGO partnerships raising the profile of human settlements internationally and could conceivably have some tangible spin-offs for your other work.

Ortiz: We had experts coming, but they first needed to learn the language. Sometimes they stayed for two years learning, then they had to go back. In the level of development, we need the support of foreign solidarity, and I am worried we will not be able to attain many things if we don't have some support. Sometimes your own government isn't interested until you have established some outside interest. It would be interesting to share a common strategy re. forced evictions, etc. The main thing is we have to work together. We don't need experts coming to say what we have to do because this is not well received.

RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION

ENJEUX DE LA RÉHABILITATION RÉSIDENTIELLE

Jean-Claude Oilette (Chair)
Société d'habitation du Québec

Jacques Trudel
Analysis and Research Branch
Société d'habitation du Québec

Ron Corbett
Rural and Small Town Research and Studies Program
Mount Allison University
Sackville, New Brunswick

Laverne Brubacher
Chair, Renovation Council
Canadian Home Builders' Association

As an intriguing introduction to the subject of residential rehabilitation, Jean-Claude Ouellette, the chair of this particular session, decided not to offer any solutions. Instead, he opened the door by posing questions he hoped the panelists would attempt to answer: What is residential rehabilitation? Does this definition vary according to the different participants? What are the interests of the major actors, who include: homeowners, landlords, tenants, housing developers, builders, financial institutions, municipalities, provincial governments, and the federal government. What are their reasons for being involved? How do we evaluate rehabilitation needs? What is the difference between rehabilitation for homeowners and for landlords? What are the different stakes for the various actors already mentioned? What is the impact of government action on the overall rehabilitation market, and does it affect the different actors involved in residential rehabilitation? On what basis does a government decide one day to get massively involved and the next to withdraw abruptly from that field?

In an attempt to provide some insight into the residential rehabilitation scene in Canada, Jacques Trudel of the analysis and

In this session, topics for discussion include: unsubsidized renovation activity; monitoring the condition of the housing stock; the need for more accurate information on the renovation market; and problems confronting the burgeoning renovation industry.

Cet atelier s'adresse aux déléguées et délégués qui oeuvrent au sein de l'industrie de la rénovation. Parmi les sujets qui seront abordés, soulignons les activités de rénovation non subventionnées, le contrôle de l'état du parc de logements, la nécessité d'obtenir de l'information plus précise sur le marché de la rénovation et les problèmes auxquels doit faire face cette nouvelle industrie de la rénovation.

"Much has been said recently about the increase of residential rehabilitation activities during the past two decades, both in Canada and in Quebec, where activities have almost tripled. These figures certainly indicate an increased interest in the existing stock from households who are willing to invest in housing."

research branch of Société d'habitation du Québec, gave a brief preamble on the relatively sudden interest in renovation.

"Much has been said recently about the increase of residential rehabilitation activities during the past two decades, both in Canada and in Quebec, where activities have almost tripled," said Trudel. "These figures certainly indicate an increased interest in the existing stock from households who are willing to invest in housing. The demographic expansion also contributes by alleviating the new needs in quantitative terms and by diversifying the demand, which encourages the transformation of existing housing."

Having said this, however, Trudel wondered then about the plausibility of talking about a definitive and general evolution in favour of housing quality. He challenged members of the audience to question the scope of these trends — "especially in terms of access to quality housing for the different categories of households" — and to take a look at current information before making such a diagnostic.

To Trudel, the quality of housing is housing that encompasses many things, including its environment. "It results from many factors, which include, on one hand, factors related to housing creation and production — design, planning, quality of construction, durability of the elements — and, on the other, factors associated to its use over a period of time — maintenance, repairs, and renovation activities. But it also includes the evolution of the environment."

Housing quality can be measured in a variety of ways, said Trudel. In an economic and political context, the main reasons for measuring the quality of housing are based on the necessity to assess social housing needs resulting from adequacy problems and to evaluate public actions designed to meet these needs. Meeting these needs means focusing on an accurate measurement of adequacy problems (i.e., the minimum acceptable quality of housing) and identifying indicators related to what Trudel calls the "general quality" of housing and to the attitudes of households toward rehabilitation.

In discussing Quebec's own housing situation, Trudel said the first thing to be done is "to determine what we have in Quebec, to characterize the evolution of the situation in terms of housing quality, and to relate it to rehabilitation. We will do this by distinguishing the adequacy approach from the general quality approach and by identifying the limitations of our current knowledge and evaluation instruments in that area."

In order to respond adequately to the issue of housing quality, housing advocates generally turn to census data — all in the aim of tracking down the presence of sanitary facilities, type of heating systems used, and the need for home repairs. This tracking is useful for several reasons, including the very important reason of knowing how things have improved in a given time period. For example, Trudel pointed out that the lack of sanitary facilities is virtually unheard of in most parts of Quebec, with fewer than one per cent of Quebec's housing units without a bathroom by 1981. In addition, central heating systems had been significantly upgraded. Between 1971 and 1981, households without central heating went from 32 per cent to 12 per cent.

Although this progress "corresponded to a major improvement in building methods," said Trudel, "it became marginal in relation to the current evolution of the quality of housing."

The use of data on required repairs has seen its importance increase considerably during the 1980s, following pilot studies that attempted to show the reliability and validity of the

results obtained from a census question about the need for repairs.

However, mentioned Trudel, people's doubts quickly resurfaced when the same question was asked in Statistics Canada's surveys on household equipment but the results differed substantially from those of the census. "Although the surveys asked the same question, the elements of the answer were inverted in the Statistics Canada survey compared to the census," he said.

Two recent studies, commissioned in 1988 by CMHC, tried to explain these differences. The possibility that the inverse order of the elements of answer could be a cause was eliminated. The difference in the results is essentially due to the different technical and methodological contexts of the surveys. The reliability of the results depends mostly on the continuity and the precision of the methods used; therefore, the most significant information to be drawn from this type of question is the comparison between the results of successive similar surveys.

Currently, the best Canadian source available is the Statistics Canada survey data system, which has results for 1982, 1985, 1987, and 1988. In relation to Quebec, this source of information reveals that the total number of housing units where occupants consider major repairs are needed, after remaining stable from 1982 to 1985, has decreased to 245,000 in 1988. This, said Trudel, represents a drop of 39,000, or 14 per cent, compared with 1982; nationally, this percentage dropped from 13 per cent to 10 per cent.

Recent studies also examined the validity of data obtained from that source by comparing the results obtained from occupants with the results of inspections. On this basis, it was noted that, for Canada and Quebec, cases of major repairs were underestimated two out of three times. This finding means that, according to the inspections, there would be 50 per cent more cases, said Trudel.

The results also vary for the other provinces where major biases were also identified in the answers. The main factor was income, and the result was that low-income households underestimated the need for repairs.

"The accuracy of the results of these surveys on the need for repairs should be questioned, but this is not their major problem. Indeed, housing that requires even major repairs is not necessarily inadequate or insalubrious," said Trudel. "It is normal at a certain moment in a building's life that repairs have to be made to its basic elements. If these are done without delay, housing conditions for the occupants will not deteriorate. At the most there will be temporary discomfort."

But what does present a problem is if needed repairs are left to accumulate. "It is the duration and the accumulation of deficiencies that lead to a serious deterioration of housing conditions, and here the income of the household comes into play," said Trudel. "If the household cannot afford to make the necessary repairs or assume the resulting rent increase, it could live permanently in deficient housing. That is why there is probably a relationship between household income and housing adequacy, a relationship that not shown clearly in the available data."

Conversely, many deficiencies cannot be corrected by "repairs" as they are defined in terms of "rehabilitation." Trudel pointed out the significance of the finding that close to 80 per cent of the units lacking a bathroom in 1981 were not reported as requiring major repairs. The same, he said, also occurs for other serious under-equipment problems or problems related to safety, insulation, natural light, vermin, or the maintenance of common areas in collective buildings.

"It is the duration and the accumulation of deficiencies that lead to a serious deterioration of housing conditions, and here the income of the household comes into play."

"While we seem to be witnessing a standstill or a resurgence of socio-economic inequalities in our society, many factors are likely to encourage the maintenance, if not the resurgence, of housing adequacy and quality problems."

These examples clearly demonstrate to Trudel that the data obtained from the answers to various Canadian surveys on the need for repairs in housing do not provide accurate information on the number of inadequate or deficient housing units. This is not due so much to the fact the information is provided by the occupants — the reliability of this data-gathering method is adequate and can be improved by test surveys, said Trudel, who pointed the finger at "the limits of the question itself, which does not correspond to the concept of adequate housing."

Having said this, Trudel added that this source of statistical information is not totally useless. The results "can be taken at face value" as they provide useful information on the potential for renovation activities and on the evolution of a range of quality problems experienced temporarily or permanently by households.

It would also be relevant to correlate the occurrence of these problems with different housing and household characteristics, as well as with renovation activities. Trudel told the delegates of a similar type of analysis conducted recently by CMHC, which used data from its 1986 housing survey and other official statistical sources. This analysis showed the following:

- 50 per cent of homeowners, 61 per cent of landlords, and two per cent of tenants made renovations in 1985; however, in general, renovation efforts were not limited only to deficient housing;
- if the estimated cost of required repairs is compared to the actual expenses in this area, then the total amount invested is considerably inferior to the needs; and
- the increase in renovation activities was more significant in the "additions and improvements" category than in the "repairs and maintenance" category.

To get a better idea of the social dimension of housing adequacy problems, Trudel advised the audience that reference can be made to estimations provided by CMHC for determining core need. For example, in the fall of 1988, CMHC published estimated figures for 1985 compared with 1982. The changes that occurred during this period, he said, show a clear shifting of global needs toward tenants, "a situation no doubt linked to the fact that the increase in the cost of housing was higher than the increase in income for all categories of tenant households."

Out of all Canadian households who experienced core need housing problems in 1985, more than 300,000 experienced adequacy problems (those that, on the basis of major repairs, they could not afford to solve themselves). This figure represents an increase of 18 per cent compared to 1982, which Trudel said can be explained mainly by the indirect effect of the increase on housing costs.

"Some people will claim this is not really an increase in adequacy problems, in the sense that it is a relative cost increase in relation to income, which leads to a shift of some households in the category of those who cannot afford the cost of repairs. As I indicated earlier, we still believe the deterioration of the cost-income ratio can encourage the aggravation of adequacy problems. In a larger sense, it seems clear the increased financial difficulties of a number of households will, in time, exert pressure on the quality of the housing stock," he explained.

The most recent figures available for Quebec, which date from 1987, indicate that more than 70,000 households are experiencing

adequacy problems. "Taking into consideration the under-estimation of the need for repairs generally observed with low-income households, we could easily say there are 75,000 to 100,000 households, two-thirds of which are tenants, in that situation."

In forecasting the future housing situation in Quebec, Trudel advised analysts to use "known" factors, such as the the age and structure of the housing stock. As a point in fact, he said the average number of this province's housing units that each year reach the 25-year mark has been increasing since the 1960s. Between 1986 and 1995, this number will reach 50,700; 63,500 between 1996 and 2005. Since there is a greater need for major repairs in housing units older than 25 years, such a relative aging of the stock could result in an increase of adequacy problems, he said. "If nothing else changes, we estimated there would be an increase in the percentage of housing requiring major repairs in the order of 10.4 per cent in 1987, 12 per cent in 1997, and 13.3 per cent in 2007."

Having established the need for major repairs to Quebec's housing stock in the near future, Trudel wondered aloud about the ability for increased renovation to compensate — especially given that any increase in renovation activities occurred mainly in the "improvement" rather than the "repair" category. In fact, Trudel noted, the volume of known repair activities has remained relatively stable: In constant dollars, the annual average expense for repairs per housing unit since 1971 stands at around $110 in 1971 dollars (or $359 in 1986 dollars). Another way is to calculate the proportion of the GDP (gross domestic product) represented by these expenses: 0.72 per cent in 1971 against 0.70 per cent in 1986.

"With such results," Trudel surmised, "we cannot expect a progressive improvement of the situation."

Rehabilitation assistance programs try to improve this situation by helping owners invest in the rehabilitation of housing units that need to be repaired and which are occupied by low-income clienteles. CMHC recently estimated that approximately 400,000 housing units in Canada benefited from RRAP between 1974 and 1986. On an annual basis, only a low number of those who undertake renovation activities receive assistance, but the percentage is higher when only the program's target clienteles are considered. Based on the general proportions observed in the 1986 national survey, said Trudel, it is assumed that in 1987 some 35,000 to 40,000 targeted units in Quebec underwent renovation activities, of which 13,209 received assistance through PARCQ.

In addition, units that receive assistance have higher expenses than the general average and a better chance of getting out of the "inadequate housing" category (especially rental units under PARCQ). As for other target units, renovation activities may prove to be insufficient for correcting all the deficiencies, as is suggested by the trend to average expenses, which are clearly inferior to what is deemed necessary.

While housing adequacy is important, Trudel reminded the audience in his closing remarks that housing quality is equally so — even though current data in Canada do not refer to the 'environment' of housing (e.g., the quality of the air, the control of internal and external noise, daylight conditions, the presence of easily accessible outdoor leisure space, and the quality of services offered in collective buildings). Trudel emphasized that problems linked to these elements can be as important to the quality of life as are the elements of adequacy and affordability.

With respect to noise, for example, a survey conducted in 1984 in France showed that 21 per cent of households complained of

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living in noisy housing, and 30 per cent of these complaints came from households in collective buildings.

"While we seem to be witnessing a standstill or a resurgence of socio-economic inequalities in our society, many factors are likely to encourage the maintenance, if not the resurgence, of housing adequacy and quality problems. There is no room for excessive optimism in this regard, despite the increase in residential renovation activities, even if generalized standardization puts a halt to the worst deficiencies," said Trudel.

While rehabilitation assistance programs continue to play an essential role in solving housing adequacy problems, Trudel emphasized the importance and usefulness of identifying other, equally important, needs — especially needs relating to housing quality. But in order to identify **and** meet these esoteric needs, we need better evaluation tools.

"The renovation industry is seen as a poor cousin to the new house construction industry."

Ron Corbett's presentation on rural and urban renovation seemed a natural progression from Trudel's generalized outlook on renovation issues in Canada. Like Trudel, Corbett has found information on the residential renovation field to be limited, even scare when it comes to the rural sector.

As a result of this information void, the Rural and Small Town Research and Studies Program at Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick, for whom Corbett works, began a study in 1988 to establish what actually goes on in the residential renovation field in the Maritime provinces.

This study has not only demonstrated that renovation activity in Atlantic Canada is on the increase, said Corbett, but statistics also have indicated the rural renovation problem is much greater than the urban one. A number of reasons have been given for this apparent trend, including: the high level of building activity carried out by the unskilled homeowner; lack of enforcement of local building standards; financial red-lining by institutions as a result of poor or non-operative housing markets; the belief that rural building and repair costs are much greater than urban costs; and the idea that rural families generally place less emphasis on maintenance than their urban counterparts.

The study examined three main areas: family activity carried on by the homeowner, family, or friends; local building regulations; and technology transfer. It was carried out on a random sampling basis, with a personalized questionnaire mailed to 1,500 homes. Postcards followed the questionnaire, and the questionnaire itself was sent once again. "Then we got down on our knees and begged," said Corbett.

As a result of this intensive campaign, the response rate was quite high with more than 900 questionnaires returned. The confidence level was calculated to be 95 per cent.

Defined as any activity, repair, maintenance, alterations, or additions made to a home (with the exclusion of property), the level of renovation activity in Atlantic Canada is shown to be quite high: 82 per cent in urban areas and just over 75 per cent in rural areas.

One of the questions the group considered, said Corbett, was why people undertake renovation activities in the first place. The reasons given were almost identical for rural and urban areas, with the exception of investment, which is peculiar to urban renovators. The most frequent reason given for both areas was home comfort (painting, repairs, aesthetic make-overs, etc.); the next was regular maintenance.

A profile of the renovators in urban areas indicated that the 25-65 age group was most active; in rural areas, the most active age group was 15-55. The rural elderly — those over 75 years of age — were much more active than the urban elderly, which, said Corbett, might be a function of family structure and support.

In rural areas, mobile homes were repaired more often than single-family dwellings. The reverse was true in urban areas.

Renovation activity according to the age of the dwelling, said Corbett, is very important. The dwellings undergoing renovation in rural areas tended to be old, yet the oldest dwellings in these areas (those more than 50 years of age) were the least likely to be renovated. These were also the homes most likely to be owned by the elderly, which gives credence to the view that elderly persons are less able to maintain their homes.

In terms of financing, said Corbett, it is generally true that homeowners in rural areas will have difficulty obtaining mortgages for home renovation. Most people in these areas are forced to finance renovation activity through personal savings. Interestingly, mortgages are proportionally much larger in the rural parts of the region than the urban.

The self-help component of renovation activity in Atlantic Canada (activity carried out by the homeowner, family, or friends) is strikingly high, said Corbett, particularly in the rural areas. "Close to one-half of all rural residents performed their own regular maintenance. Almost 80 per cent of rural homeowners were involved in some form of self-help renovation; 73 per cent of urban homeowners. In the 65 years and over age category, a substantial amount of rural renovation work is undertaken by the homeowner (or more likely family or friends) — 22 per cent — as compared to only 13 per cent in urban areas."

With regard to the income levels of home renovators, said Corbett, lower-income rural homeowners participate much more frequently than their urban counterparts. (Forty-eight per cent of all rural self-helpers had incomes of less than $25,000 compared with 22 per cent of urban self-helpers.)

"Two of the major issues we have to look at in much more detail," concluded Corbett, "is the apparently enhanced ability of rural residents over urban residents to carry out self-help renovation activity. As well, self-help renovation appears to be an important factor in allowing low-income earners and the elderly to actively participate and to maintain their dwellings. Both of these observations are extremely important, particularly in terms of government programming in this area."

"The renovation industry is seen as a poor cousin to the new house construction industry," said Laverne Brubacher. "However, that perception is changing, one reason being the sheer size of the industry. Most estimates place the home renovation market just below $18 billion for 1988, with projections at around $20 billion for 1989. This means Canadians spent more money renovating existing houses last year than they spent building new ones. And this is likely to continue in the 1990s."

With this opening statement, Brubacher, the chair of the Canadian Home Builders' Association's renovation council, steered the panel's attention to another side of the renovation question — the economic and demand side. Brubacher remarked on an emerging general consensus that the new house market has slipped out ot contact with the reality of general market conditions, which represent typical prospective home buyers. As an

"Many of the adjustments that need to be made will not come in the area of new house construction. There are simply not enough houses being built on an annual basis to accommodate all the people who need affordable housing right now."

example, he held up for example recent trends to building bigger homes, even though the sizes of families has been decreasing. "The houses being built now are too large and too expensive for the average potential buyer — which means some major adjustments will have to be made to Canada's housing stock. Otherwise, Canadians will be left without any hope of ever being able to buy a home."

The answer, said Brubacher, may lie in renovation. "Many of the adjustments that need to be made will not come in the area of new house construction. There are simply not enough houses being built on an annual basis to accommodate all the people who need affordable housing right now. These adjustments will have to come from renovations to the existing stock."

The growth of any industry must be looked at in terms of demand and supply. And in this day and age, said Brubacher, increasing demand is pretty much a "given." Four major factors will shape demand for residential renovation work in the 1990s. One is an echo from record housing sales that has been witnessed over the past four or five years; the second concerns demographics or the lifestyles of people who have bought and are now homeowners; the third concerns energy efficiency and environmental concerns; and the fourth relates to concerns about affordability.

With respect to housing sales, Brubacher cited statistics that show new house sales and MLS sales have been at record levels for the last four or five years. This sales activity is having an impact on the renovation industry already, no doubt because today's homeowner is quite a bit different than the homeowner of earlier generations. "Compared to earlier generations, these homeowners are generally more affluent and certainly more comfortable with debt. Much of the spending power this government enjoys has been channelled directly into lifestyle purchases. We are seeing the effect this has had in housing, and I believe we will see a counterpart to this effect in renovation work during the 1990s."

In addition, family lifestyle changes have had a marked effect on housing. Families used to progress though a reasonably stable evolution of marriage, child-rearing, and so forth, an evolution that translated into first-time buyers, move-up buyers, and empty-nesters. But the living arrangements of the current generation are much less stable, commented Brubacher, and this has meant that singles are now buying houses in partnership; couples are waiting until their late 30s to have children; and the high incidence of divorce and remarriage have virtually dissolved the traditional life cycle of the Canadian family. This will translate into rapidly changing demands on the part of homeowners: Sometimes these homeowners will simply move to a more appropriate house; but many times, for one reason or another, they will want to remake an existing home in a new image.

Environmental concerns and a growing interest in energy efficiency are also factors in shaping the demand for renovation work. For the past several years, interest in energy efficiency has been declining, which Brubacher attributes to not only low energy prices but also to shifting priorities on the part of younger homeowners, who wanted reduced maintenance, as well as a more comfortable and modern house. Two things could change this trend in the 1990s: First, the paybacks for retrofit work could become more attractive either through more effective technology or higher energy prices; and second, increasing concerns about the environment could translate into a desire for housing that places fewer demands on energy supply.

The three demand factors — echo from sales, demographics, and energy efficiency — all have to do with current homeowners., said Brubacher. As such, they work from the inside market.

The fourth factor, which relates to Canadians searching for decent, affordable housing, works outside the market. Because the demand for renovation work that is driven by this external force significantly differs from the demand that is driven by the three internal factors, Brubacher provided his explanation of these demand forces.

"As an industry, we are used to dealing with internally driven demand. Take a customer who wants aluminum siding on his house so he won't have to paint it anymore. He approaches an individual renovator and gets the job done. Same thing for someone who wants to finish their basement or upgrade their heating system. The common element is that a customer and a renovator enter into an agreement to carry out a specified project. A contract is struck, and the work is carried out. Our track record for meeting the needs of homeowners is very good. While many homeowners describe the selection of a contractor as one of their most difficult decisions, research suggests that customer satisfaction with home renovations is very high."

However, according to Brubacher, addressing the needs of a new group of people outside the housing market who want to get in will require a "vastly different" market dynamic from the one on which renovators have relied in the past. Brubacher explained: "Think back to 1983 or 1984 when land was plentiful and we were just recovering from a housing slump. Builders used to do something almost unheard of today: They built on spec. Land development, which is a major part of the industry, is still done on spec. But very little new house construction is done this way any more — not in the hotter markets at least. And renovation work is not done on spec. However, if this fourth source of demand is to be met by our industry, renovators will need to become more entrepreneurial. They will have to buy properties, develop them with renovation work, and resell them."

For this to occur, however, the industry needs highly detailed information about current stock, both residential and non-residential, and community profiles in order that potential demand can be accurately assessed and renovators can find ways to most effectively and efficiently meet this demand. In addition to this market data, renovators also need information about new technologies and designs specifically suited for efficiently renovating different types of buildings for residential use.

Second, Brubacher said, municipalities have to rethink many of their attitudes toward converting non-residential to residential and low-density to high-density property. This review will have to include building codes and zoning restrictions, as well as a concerted effort to streamline the approvals process. This is particularly crucial because renovating on spec is risky. "A delayed approvals process adds to that risk. It would be a tragedy if, at the end of the day, red tape was the only thing left preventing the renovation industry from doing its part to ease affordability problems."

Changes will also be required in the financial climate to make renovation projects more viable. Some of these changes will have to be initiated by banks and lending institutions; other changes could come from government in the form of tax law reform. Last, said Brubacher, changes will have to occur within the renovation industry itself. "Buying a property and developing it

by carrying out renovation work presents far more business risk than renovators have traditionally assumed. Renovators who take on projects of this type will require more business acumen and will need more business and marketing training." With respect to affordable housing, Brubacher added: "Conversion to low-cost housing will be more difficult as there will be narrower [profit] margins, risks will be higher, and fewer buildings will lend themselves to economical conversion."

Brubacher called on the home building/renovation industry to bring the dream of homeownership closer to more and more Canadians by accepting conversion as a reasonable alternative. "While conversion is not a panacea, as no single measure can reasonably be expected to solve all the problems that are keeping the dream of homeownership out of reach of more and more Canadians. But conversion can and must be added to the mix of solutions needed to address this problem. The renovation industry can play a major role in making more housing more accessible to more Canadians."

AFFORDABLE HOMEOWNERSHIP

L'ACCESSION À LA PROPRIÉTÉ À COÛT ABORDABLE

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Is it possible for a large percentage of households to become homeowners in our major urban centres? This and other questions are addressed in this session.

Est-il possible pour une grande proportion de ménages de devenir propriétaires dans nos principaux centres urbains? Voilà une des diverses questions qui seront abordées dans le cadre de cette séance.

Affordable homeownership is fast becoming an unattainable dream for many renters. How to attain the 'impossible dream' was the focus for this session's speakers, who each tackled the topic in terms of their own province's homeownership and financing initiatives.

Michael Merritt, research planning officer for the New Brunswick Housing Corporation, cited high unemployment rates, relatively low wages, and the increasing cost of housing in relation to income as three main factors preventing people from attaining homeownership in the province. "Another major problem in the Maritimes in general and especially in New Brunswick is that the housing stock is much older than in other parts of the country. Therefore, although people can afford the list price of these older units (often $20,000 to $40,000), they cannot afford the repairs that go along with them. For this reason, affordability problems may be encountered after a house has been purchased."

These factors have greatly contributed to two main problems facing first-time homebuyers. The first is many families opt to build their own homes using resources accumulated over the years. All too often, said Merritt, those resources run out before

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the home is completed leaving the would-be homeowner with a partially completed dwelling and no means of financing the rest of the construction. The other problem is that, due to the combination of low wages and high housing costs, many families are unable to obtain the downpayment necessary to purchase an adequate home.

To deal with these homeownership problems, said Merritt, the New Brunswick Housing Corporation has recently introduced two state initiatives: the Home Completion Loan Program and the Downpayment Assistance Program.

The Home Completion Loan Program provides a $20,000 loan to individuals with incomes between $15,000 and $30,000. (Individuals making less than $15,000 must have their loans individually approved by the corporation's vice-president of operations.) The program targets the $15,000-$30,000 income range to compensate for the fact that most of the province's social housing programs are aimed at those making less than $15,000. The loans are fully repayable unless an individual is paying over 30 per cent of his or her income for shelter costs. Above this 30 per cent level, homeowners are subsidized by the corporation in order to avoid after-purchase affordability problems.

The Downpayment Assistance Program, explained Merrit, is designed to assist low- to middle-income families in the purchase of their "modest" first home. Again, eligible families must have incomes between $15,000 and $30,000 and be purchasing their first home or upgrading from substandard dwellings. "The reason for the substandard dwelling clause," said Merritt, "is many of these families would not be able make sufficient repairs to their homes under present programming to render them adequate, and it is simply easier and less expensive to move them into a new home."

One of the key features of the program, said Merritt, is individuals must be approved for a first mortgage by a private lending institution in order to qualify for a loan from the New Brunswick Housing Corporation. Also, clients must be in possession of at least five per cent of their downpayment in land, cash, or sweat equity. Merritt believes the sweat equity component is especially important in the rural areas of the province.

Under the program, any funds required for the purchase in excess of the five per cent downpayment are covered by the NBHC. The homes, said Merritt, may be slightly upmarket (to the point of being considered "modest" dwellings) of what individuals could afford to purchase on the private market. A family with a $15,000 income can purchase a home for up to $45,000. To avoid affordability problems if both loans have to be paid off at once, families receiving assistance are granted a full principle and interest subsidy for the first five years on the NBHC portion of the mortgage. Even with only modest-income growth, said Merritt, few families will require assistance on their second loan beyond the five years. In those cases where an affordability problem persists, however, a 30 per cent shelter cost allowance is provided on the NBHC portion of the loan.

Loans obtained under the program, which can be applied to the purchase of either a new or existing home worth up to $75,000 in urban areas and $65,000 in rural areas, must be amortized over 25 years. "The reason for this stipulation," Merritt said, "is if the amortization period were reduced to 20 or 15 years, the NBHC would be paying the extra amount in its five-year subsidy. In any case, since most of the people applying for the loan program are faced with an affordability problem, an

amortization period of less than 25 years would not be an option in the first place."

Following a similar trend, homeownership activity in the province of Quebec is also slowing to a trickle. According to Bernard McCann, of Société d'habitation du Québec's analysis and research department, most homeownership activity in the province occurred during the past 15 years, from 1971 to 1986. Less activity during the last five years is believed to be due to the economic situation.

But, stressed McCann, this does not necessarily mean that housing costs are exorbitant. "There is much talk that housing has become unaffordable in Quebec, but this is not necessarily due to the cost of buying a house. If we look at the evolution of the price of houses in relation to the average family income in Quebec, we note that during the past 15 years both have progressed in about the same direction. We have to look beyond the price of houses and examine the price of homeownership." For McCann, such an examination must concentrate on two areas: the cost of acquiring a house and the operating costs for the first year.

With respect to the cost of acquiring a house and how this cost has progressed during the past 15 years, four items are included under the category of acquisition costs. These items are minimal average downpayment, the cost of subscribing to the mortgage insurance, notary fees (Quebec buyers must go through a notary to register their residence), and the "welcome" tax.

At the beginning of the '70s, buying a house used to require around $1,000. This amount has increased tenfold during the past 15 years to the point that today a household needs $10,000 as a minimum to purchase an average-priced house in a city such as Montreal.

In terms of family income, McCann noted that during the '70s, the percentage of income required to buy a house in Quebec represented 10 per cent of a family's annual average income. "It was easy for a family to save this amount over one year and buy their house the next year." However, in 1986-87, this cost represented 25 per cent of the annual income, which means it takes much longer for the family to save this amount.

As for first-year operating costs, these include the annual cost of taxes, insurance, maintenance and repair, and heating. The average operating cost for an average property, said McCann, has jumped from around $2,500 in 1971 to $10,000 in 1981. It stood at $11,000 in 1987.

The rate of effort fluctuates according to the economic situation. In 1972, the average rate of effort was 23 per cent, while today it stands at about 27 per cent, after reaching 28 per cent when interest rates hovered around 20 per cent in the early 1980s.

"With these figures," explained McCann, "we can determine the proportion of the population who can access homeownership. In 1971, the required income to access homeownership was $8,800; in 1986, this was $33,000. At the beginning of the '70s, the proportion of tenant households who could access homeownership was fairly high — between 330,000 to 386,000 households. This figure dropped to 100,000 when interest rates were high, but it has since increased to 250,000."

Quoting George Anderson, President of CMHC, who had earlier mentioned that fewer tenants are now able to access homeownership, McCann said that 55 per cent of the Quebec

"The reason for the substandard dwelling clause is many of these families would not be able make sufficient repairs to their homes under present programming to render them adequate, and it is simply easier and less expensive to move them into a new home."

population are homeowners. And, "if we include the 250,000 potential homeowners as homeowners, the rate of homeowners will reach 63 per cent, which is equal to the Canadian rate."

In a brief summary, McCann surmised that while the cost of homeownership appears to be relatively affordable in Quebec because prices are reasonable, homeownership is less accessible at the moment given the amount of downpayment required to buy a first house. "It would be a shame to slow it down [even more] by overtaxing housing. I believe the 9 per cent tax on goods and services that will be applied to the construction of new housing will make this product less accessible to first-time home buyers."

"The strong growth in the market and the recent rise in interest rates combined with the fact there is no available government assistance appears to be causing some real surface affordability problems in Winnipeg."

Confining his remarks to a general overview of affordability in the Prairie provinces, Glenn Silliphant, executive director of the New Home Warranty Program of Saskatchewan, said the number of variables in the affordability equation tend to make it a very dynamic and complex issue.

To illustrate his point, Silliphant tracked a single house type in a single neighbourhood from 1981 to 1989 in the Royal LePage survey of Canadian house prices in each of the "fairly representative" prairie cities of Calgary, Regina, and Winnipeg. For the purposes of this overview, said Silliphant, "I chose what I thought most people would describe as a relatively modest house in Canada — a detached, 1200 square-foot bungalow, with one-and-a-half baths, and a single car garage. According to current Real Estate Board of Canada figures, one can buy this house today for $89,000 in northeast Calgary, $88,500 in Regina, and $103,500 in Winnipeg's North Kildonan." Silliphant then used average household income data from Statistics Canada and looked at the income required to carry a 90 per cent, 25-year mortgage at the prevailing NHA interest rates with a maximum debt service ratio permitted by most lenders of 30 per cent.

According to Silliphant, the affordability curve in Calgary has been volatile over the last decade. "Not only did interest rates cause severe problems in 1981 and 1982, but Calgary was in the middle of an unprecedented real estate boom. The price of a three-bedroom bungalow rose to a peak of $99,000 in 1981. This meant to qualify for that level of mortgage financing, the required income level was in the neighbourhood of $50,000. When interest rates slid to 13.5 per cent the following year, the bottom fell out of the real estate market and house prices dropped dramatically over the next two years. The cost of that same house bottomed out at $70,000 in 1984."

Although the Calgary market began to recover in 1985 and has risen steadily ever since, continued Silliphant, affordability is becoming a problem once again. "During its last election campaign, the Alberta government promised a mortgage protection program to shelter people from rates in excess of 12 per cent on a $75,000 mortgage." This, he said, would have a marginal impact on affordability by slightly lowering the required annual income level.

Regina shows a similar affordability curve, although its effect was not as volatile as that experienced in Calgary. "In 1982," said Silliphant, "the Province of Saskatchewan initiated the Home Owners' Protection Plan to help all homeowners lower the cost of interest to 13.25 per cent for the first $50,000 borrowed. At that time, the interest rate was 18.25 per cent, which meant the government would have given the buyer of a three-bedroom

bungalow a monthly cheque of $182. This would have had the effect of reducing the required income of $47,500 for a three-bedroom bungalow to approximately $40,000." When interest rates dropped the following year, the program lay dormant, only to be revamped in 1986 as the Mortgage Protection Plan. This plan provides a direct subsidy to all homeowners to reduce their interest rates to 9.75 for the first $50,000 of mortgage.

According to Silliphant, the program was relatively unused until the latter part of 1988, when interest rates started to climb again. "In 1989, with the interest rate at 12.5 per cent," he said, "the government was subsidizing all mortgages of $50,000 and more to the tune of approximately $100 a month. The effect of the program has been to dampen swings in the affordability curve caused by fluctuating interest rates and to level out homeowner payments over time. When this is combined with stable house prices and rising incomes, it produces what is probably the most affordable housing market in Canada."

In Calgary and Regina then, said Silliphant, average household incomes have risen much faster than the income required to afford the mortgage payments.

In Winnipeg, however, it is a different story. Interest rates have had the same general effect on the affordability curve. However, whereas housing prices in that city began at lower levels than those of either Regina or Calgary, they have accelerated at a rate of $5,000 to $10,000 per year to the point where the cost of a three-bedroom bungalow in that city is now in excess of the other two cities — standing at $103,500. "The strong growth in the market and the recent rise in interest rates, combined with the fact there is no available government assistance," said Silliphant, "appears to be causing some real surface affordability problems in that city."

To examine the issue of affordability in terms of the first-time home buyer, Silliphant considered the local market definition of a "starter home." In each of the three cities, he compared the current price of a small 900- to 1,000-square foot, three-bedroom bungalow and a 1,000-square foot, three-bedroom bugalow.

In terms of the percentage of households who could currently afford a starter home, Silliphant found Regina to be the most affordable city. "A recent national home buyer's survey carried out by Royal LePage," he said, "shows some of the youngest homeowners in Canada reside in Regina and Saskatoon. At 38 per cent of all purchasers, the level of first-time home buyers surpasses the national average by five percentage points. The percentage of single people buying homes in Saskatoon was 29, putting that city in a tie position with Toronto for the highest in the country."

For most western Canadians, homeownership is an affordable option, said Silliphant. Since the general concensus in the Prairie provinces seems to be that downpayments are not a real problem, recent provincial and federal developments in this regard will probably not have much impact in this part of Canada. "CMHC is looking at changing downpayment requirements from 10 per cent to five per cent for first-time home buyers, and the Alberta government has introduced a program to assist first-time home buyers by financing $4,000 of their downpayment. While this might help a first-time home buyer who has cash flow but limited savings to access a home sooner, I do not think it will have a big impact in western Canada. In fact, most western builders are able to devise creative sweat equity techniques to allow downpayments for as little as $500."

As opposed to the current problem faced by Ontario — a tremendous influx of people and a housing affordability problem

"CMHC is looking at changing downpayment requirements from 10 per cent to five per cent for first-time home buyers."

— the real problem at the moment in Saskatchewan is a weak provincial economy and a net outflow of people, said Silliphant. "In the first three months of 1989, the net outflow of people from the province was 6,500. Vacancy rates have risen to 10 per cent, the highest they have been in the last decade."

In terms of solutions, Silliphant could offer no quick fix. "Perhaps we have to look at national policies that would encourage immigration to other parts of Canada; maybe in the end we will all wind up in Vancouver or Toronto. There are as many dimensions to the problem of housing affordability as there are markets in Canada. Clearly, however, senior governments must bring all the interest groups together in each particular area to define the problems of housing accessibility and their resolution."

"(In recent years) a multitude of housing projects have emerged. For a number of reasons, few projects or homes have been oriented towards the first-time homebuyer."

Urban planners Peter Leblanc and Gary Gregoris, of R.E. Winter & Associates, a private consulting firm of engineers, architects, planners, and landscape architects situated in Mississauga, were invited to speak about an innovative concept their firm developed as a result of a proposal call. The Ministry of Housing and the Toronto Real Estate Board were looking for a homeownership intensification demonstration project that would involve the private sector in producing a housing form that would be sold in the Greater Toronto area real estate markets for less than $180,000. The design concept of R.E. Winter & Associates was selected as one of the winning entries.

To set the stage for elaborating on this winning demonstration project, however, Gregoris began by first discussing the Ontario homeownership scene. "In recent years, Ontario has experienced unprecedented growth in its economy. And, although most of Ontario is enjoying a period of prosperity, southern Ontario, in particular the Metropolitan Toronto area, has captured the majority of the province's growth and development."

"In response to this tremendous growth," continued Gregoris, "a multitude of housing initiatives have emerged. For a number of reasons, however, few projects or homes have been targeted as affordable, and few have been oriented toward the first-time home buyer."

Gregoris believes the shortage of serviced land is one of the main contributing factors to the lack of affordable housing in the Metropolitan Toronto area. "There are two reasons for this shortage of available land," he said. "The first is a lack of infrastructure, such as water and sewage treatment plants, which holds land in abeyance for development. The second is the timing of approvals. It is estimated in Ontario, the average time required for the planning approval process to take land from its virtually raw state to a state of development is between two and four years. In many cases, this time-frame is much longer."

The tremendous demand for such a limited supply has pushed the price of land to exorbitant levels, said Gregoris, and has subsequently restricted the building industry from providing affordable housing in the Metropolitan Toronto region. "In the City of Mississauga, Canada's ninth largest city, home builders are paying in excess of $4,000 per linear foot frontage for a building lot. Translated, this means that a typical 50-foot lot before construction has an approximate value of $200,000."

As a result, said Gregoris, the average price for a single-family dwelling in the Metro Toronto area is in excess of $270,000. "Potential purchasers are required to provide a 25 per cent

downpayment of close to $70,000 and maintain an average household income of more than $80,000. Average household income levels in the metro area, however, range from $40,000 and $60,000, which makes the average single-family dwelling virtually unaffordable for most people."

Despite this gloomy picture, Gregoris remains optimistic a large number of people in the urban areas of southern Ontario, including first-time home buyers, can become homeowners if several steps are implemented. Gregoris called for: innovative building design; intensification projects that maximize the use of existing services; increased suburban density levels; reduced municipal standards, both in terms of zoning and infrastructure, which encourage affordable housing concepts and projects; expeditious planning approval processes; and strong political support and community acceptance of non-traditional housing forms.

The R.E. Winter & Associates Ltd. project, as described by Peter Leblanc, incorporates many of the ideas outlined by Gregoris. "Our proposal sets forth various measures that may be used to develop dwellings for under $180,000 while generally satisfying modern-day expectations regarding dwelling design, living space, and privacy," Leblanc said. "It is our premise, through innovative designs and execution, there will be sufficient opportunities for first-time home buyers to enter the homeownership market."

Due to the reduced frontage and right-of-way requirements used by the project, said Leblanc, special design guidelines must be formulated to ensure a unified, high-quality image of the streetscape. "It is proposed that architectural control with respect to building elevations, colours, and materials be implemented and ultimately registered on title for each unit to maintain the character of the area for years to come."

Although the proposal is affordable, the perception of a high-quality community does not have to be compromised, insisted Leblanc. "One of the objectives of our design is to recognize the street edge as an important visual element. Accordingly, all garages are flush with the front elevations of the dwelling units to restrict their overall impact. Furthermore, a variety of landscaping is proposed to complement the streetscape, reinforce the unit, and define the rearyard privacy area of each unit."

The goal of the project, Leblanc said, is to design an affordable housing scheme in the form of 'The Canadian Dream,' which he defined as: dwellings of freehold tenure with garages, private yards, and efficient interior accommodations to satisfy the basic requirements of modern-day life. Project objectives include: the establishment of innovative site planning and design guidelines that minimize construction costs and maintain a neighbourhood atmosphere conducive to family living; the development of measures that expedite and streamline the normal land development and building permit approval processes; the development of a cost-effective engineering infrastructure conforming to acceptable engineering principles but not necessarily to the standards endorsed by all municipalities; the creation of a development concept that can be transferred and constructed with limited modifications in other areas; the creation of a dwelling type that does not exceed three times family income; the provision of a mix of freehold unit types for variety, affordability, and aesthetics; conformity to all recognized building codes; and compatibility with adjacent neighbourhoods.

The proposed single-family dwelling unit, Leblanc said, is a split, two-level structure with a main floor kitchen, living room, master bedroom, and amenities. There are two options for the

"We believe there is great potential to create more opportunities for households to become first-time home buyers in our major urban centres providing the expectations of the consumer are reduced, and the political will exists to promote innovation."

Question and Answer Period

Q: It seems to me we are feeding a myth that is no longer a viable option — this famous North American Dream about having a house or bungalow in the suburbs somewhere. We still associate intensification with the poor. I think we have to get to the state where we start marketing intensification as being a societal choice. Intensification is also going to have to be for the rich. We have got to take off another set of mental blinkers to get to the stage of just saying, "We've got to look at the way we develop our cities in a different way." We shouldn't be talking about intensification; we are not just talking about housing in a society where resources are limited.

In Montreal, we have been talking about a property tax rebate in order to encourage first-time homeowners. I wanted to ask the panel if they had any comments about the effectiveness of that as a strategy for assisting people to become first-time owners. The proposal is that property taxes be 100 per cent rebated in the first year, 80 per cent rebated in the second, 60 in the third, and so on until they are paying full property taxes in year six. Do you have any comments on that?

McCann: In terms of dealing with the Canadian Dream, I think it is a very good point that the perception of Canadians for many, many years to have a large suburban house will have to change in terms of the houses they want. I think this is a very good point, and I think it requires public perceptions to be revised.

A: To address the point regarding the property tax as a rebate, I think in the Ontario markets, in

basement floor plan: a single-car garage and an optional finished bedroom and bath; or a two-car, tandem garage with an entrance into another optional bedroom within the garage. In terms of exterior design, a single-car garage, elevated front entrance, and gabled roof features provide interest along the front facade of the building. The street elevation of the building is to be finished with brick veneer, the remainder with aluminum siding. The size of the dwelling is approximately 751 square feet.

The twin unit, said Leblanc, is a unique two-and-one-half storey dwelling incorporating two fully independent living units of approximately 800 square feet each. While constructed in a stacked format, the units resemble a single-family dwelling. To make the arrangement practical, garage and entry vestibule are common areas. Two tandem spaces are found within each entry-level garage, and a common stairway leads up to the "first level." The first level (one complete unit) incorporates the great room, kitchen, bath, laundry facilities, and an option for two bedrooms or one large bedroom and various facilities. The upper level (the second unit) uses the same floor plan, with a separate side entrance. Both units have walkouts and private yard areas on the ground level.

Purchase land costs are based on current market value prices, said Leblanc, and the project uses a standard of 250 feet per saleable frontage per acre, or approximately $4,000 per frontage foot. "Through intensification and relaxed standards," he said, "the density of the project is enhanced, therefore reducing overall land costs. Taking all costs into consideration (land, services, and payment of lot levies), the total is $3 million for a three-acre site. On a yield of 50 units, land costs can be reduced from between $180,000 and $200,000 to $60,000 per unit."

This, said Leblanc, is what really makes the project work. Land designated low-density residential is intensified, which spreads the land cost over a large number of units. "Construction costs are fairly standard. For the single unit, we have maintained a cost of approximately $81 a square foot; for the twin unit, $71 a square foot."

In the design of the site plan, R.E. Winter & Associates Ltd. considered various zoning categories in the Toronto area. "We wanted to maintain a physical separation between buildings," said Leblanc, "while providing a private, outdoor amenity area; maintaining an adequate frontyard setback; and permitting on-site parking and limited onstreet parking in the creation of a zoning classification that can be transferred to other areas."

The lot frontage of the single-family unit is approximately 27 feet (frontage of the smallest lots in the outer municipalities is 32 feet, but in some urban areas it is less than 27). There is a 20-foot setback to the street and a 25-foot setback in the rear, in accordance with various zoning classifications. Maximum lot coverage is maintained at approximately 40 per cent.

Twin units are constructed on the perimeter of the site, said Leblanc. Two twin units are adjoined, making a total of four units in each building. There is a five-metre frontage per unit. Surveys would need to be innovative and three-dimensional, with property lines running horizontal through the various units and providing all units with a ground-floor property area.

In terms of required infrastructure design, said Leblanc, the project uses condominium/townhouse standards and applies them to freehold ownership. Herein lies the innovation. Roads would be roughly standard, but the services are provided in private easements within the properties. Sidewalks would be

eliminated due to intensification. The firm is considering pre-cast curbing as opposed to continuous, poured curbing.

To fast-track any innovative proposal, Leblanc said that co-operation among the various levels of government is required. "We have received a great deal of co-operation from the Ontario Ministry of Housing — especially its Housing Advocacy Task Force — and the Region of Peel. A commitment has been given to the priority processing of all affordable housing applications. The Peel Non-Profit Housing Corporation has lent its expertise in devising a way to control speculation. In addition, the Toronto Home Builders' Association, which has itself been involved in devising affordable housing concepts, has given its support to the demonstration project. Our client, a local Toronto-based company, provided a site for land intensification."

Although under the terms of the demonstration project the concept has been developed for the private sector, it is certainly not restricted to the private sector. "We see the double duplex in particular as being easily integrated into non-profit or co-op developments on small sites, or in areas where neighbourhood controls will not allow for low-rise apartment style units. In addition, the double duplex type dwelling could act as a buffer between low-rise residential and proposed higher density low-rise apartment units."

"In closing," said Leblanc, "we believe there is great potential to create more opportunities for households to become first-time home buyers in our major urban centres — providing that the expectations of the consumer are reduced and the political will exists to promote innovation."

particular in the Toronto market, it is such a small component. The real issue is getting people into the house. It seems that once they are in, they can absorb some of those operating costs of a normal single-family dwelling.

Q: I would really like next year's conference to have a forum or workshop with some people involved in manufactured housing, to explore how that product can be used in creating affordable housing.

My second comment relates to speaking on behalf of a small group of people who I find slip through the cracks when we talk about such incentives as first-time homeowner programs of any kind. These are people who are trading up in their housing by moving up-market from small communities to the main centres. Using myself as a case in point, after university I saved up my homeownership savings plan for a few years and then I bought my first house in Sudbury. Six years later, my house had gone up by 20 per cent. I took the bit of equity that I managed to build in six years in my own house and moved to Ottawa. The 20 per cent equity from my little house in Sudbury didn't go too far in Ottawa I'll tell you because the same house in Ottawa had doubled in that period. It would be very attractive for governments who are planning homeowner programs to look not only at people as first-time homeowners on the assumption that first-time homeowners once they buy their house will stay within that market. Trading within that market doesn't present a problem. But if you move from a low-inflation market to a high-inflation market, then you are effectively starting all over again. Some allowance should be made for people who tend to fall between those cracks and are moving

from small-town or small-city Ontario to major centres so they can better absorb and weather the shock of that move.

Q: In the last design project, great attention was spent on the visual aspect to make the project look like a single-family or detached home. But within the actual internal use of the space, you have two units one on top of another in a frame building, where I would assume some attention was given to the acoustical separation. You have it laterally on the sides when it is detached, but you have got one family over the other in the model. One of the interesting aspects of the single-family home is the flexibility it offers in terms of creating more space as families' needs change. I noted you have the attic space, but it was made with a roof truss where expansion into it didn't seem to be as natural an outcome as a free basement is in a single-family home. I wonder if as much attention was spent on the actual functional use of single-family homes as single families use them and the acoustical separation as was devoted to the appearance to make it look like a suburban single-family home?

Leblanc: In terms of the separation, a variety of construction techniques were contemplated to increase the separation between levels, but nothing has been decided yet. With respect to the truss and the expansion up into the gable areas, a unique truss system was designed with affordability in mind in terms of looking at ensuring an efficient use of space. There is the possibility of expanding into some of the upper areas in the twin units, thereby creating some additional areas and increasing the square footage. But I think even more could be done in the future.

QUALITY OF LIFE IN SOCIAL HOUSING

LA QUALITÉ DE VIE DANS LE LOGEMENT SOCIAL

Robert Cohen (Chair)
Executive Director
Société d'habitation et de développement de Montréal

James Rice
Executive Director
Meriden Housing Authority, Connecticut

Denis Luneau
Executive Director
Office municipale d'habitation du Québec

Mary Tate
Tenant Support Services Branch
Ontario Ministry of Housing

A fundamental part of social housing managment is the quality of community. This workshop explores the issues affecting community life in social housing — drugs, crime, property damage — and discusses ways of fostering a sense of community.

Une part fondamentale de la gestion du logement social repose sur la qualité de vie dans les collectivités. Cet atelier traite des questions touchant la vie communautaire dans le secteur du logement — la drogue, le crime, les dommages matériels — et examine les moyens de favoriser l'esprit communautaire.

"One of the most interesting things in terms of the quality of life in social housing," said James Rice, executive director of the Meriden Housing Authority in Connecticut, "is the initial acceptance of an application. At that time, you should be looking at the application as one of a number of processes in terms of providing quality of life not only to the prospective tenant but also to those tenants to whom the individual will be living close."

Within that process, said Rice, several items must be investigated: the tenant's ability to pay the rent; the tenant's ability to keep a decent apartment; the tenant's ability to exist or co-exist with other people. "We run credit checks, landlord checks, and other social checks to ensure that we are getting the best we can get."

One difficulty associated with investigating an application, said Rice, is that social agencies, in referring a prospective tenant or tenant family, will go to extremes to point out reasons why the housing corporation should accept these individuals. "In some cases," he said, "the individuals have committed murder, are on drugs, or are on welfare and are not handling their money properly."

To overcome some of these difficulties, explained Rice, after the initial investigation is completed, the corporation visits the prospective tenant in his or her dwelling, and a decision is made

"It is difficult to make people understand the importance of feeling like they own a piece of the pie. We find, however, that when tenants are engaged in making their lives and the lives of those around them better, a development or project has a much greater chance of survival."

as to whether that prospective tenant can co-exist with other tenants. If a tenant is placed, the corporation checks on his or her daily living to ensure the tenant or tenant's family is getting along in the social housing environment.

Another difficulty encountered by the corporation is making sure tenants play an active role in their community, an essential component in ensuring quality of life. "It is difficult to make people understand the importance of feeling as if they own a piece of the pie. We find, however, that when tenants are engaged in making their lives and the lives of those around them better, a development or project has a much greater chance of survival."

Rice admits tenants are often justified in their belief that administrations do not care about them and are concerned only with collecting the rent money. "Within the last four or five years, however," he said, "more of an emphasis has been placed on tenant involvement and the tenant having a piece of the pie."

One thing to be careful of, cautioned Rice, is most authorities consist of a board of commissioners, whose members sometimes have difficulty understanding the importance of routinely checking up on tenants: who they are, what they are all about, and whether they are up to no good in the neighbourhood. "Some of the commissioners feel we should let anybody in, regardless of the situation and the circumstances."

"Once you start to accept those drug pushers or drug users," said Rice, "violence and crime increase, especially in high- density projects where 2,000 families are concentrated on less than two acres of land." In response to this problem, said Rice, Jack Kemp, secretary of HUD in Washington, is working with the Legal Aid Society to develop regulations that will enable housing authorities to evict drug addicts and pushers.

Rice believes tenant accountability is one of the most important factors affecting quality of life in social housing. "Quality of life is not simply equated to existing and having an apartment," he said. "It entails the shared responsibility of being socially accountable. One of the biggest problems we encounter is tenants who do not wish to pay the rent." Rice's own philosophy is, 'If you don't pay, you don't stay' — the only equitable way to deal with the situation. "Most of the tenants living in these units are responsibly paying their rent. A tenant who moves in and feels the housing authority owes him or her everything has another thing coming. Every tenant must play his or her part."

Race relations is another problem facing the housing authority. "It is a given," Rice told the audience, "that when you have a variety of race or ethnic groups living in a single community, you are going to encounter difficulties. Different people see things from different perspectives." One solution to the problem of racial and ethnic tension in social housing developments, said Rice, is to meet regularly with the various group leaders and find out what is bothering them. Potentially serious situations can be averted "by sitting down with these people and saying, 'Hey, look, what do you folks want to accomplish? Do you want to make it better for you while you are living in this environment, or do you want to create havoc, envy, anger, and disruption'?"

In many instances, said Rice, racial tension seems to arise from situations where one groups feels the authority is favouring another. "If, for instance, an Hispanic group believed that a black family was involved in drugs yet was not evicted from the development, they might feel we were guilty of favouritism." In this kind of situation, it is important to show the disgruntled group there are reasons why the authority cannot just jump in

and finger someone, that there has to be just cause. "One of the things we cannot do is discuss what goes on with family X or family Y. If you can get people to understand that by getting together and discussing these issues, you can get around a lot of the difficulties."

Rice believes there are six key ingredients in the quality of life process in social housing: the application; placement; daily living; tenant community involvement; management support; and tenant accountability. He emphasized the importance of the management support component. "Sometimes we, as administrators or sub-administrators, climb into our ivory towers and fail to look closely enough at the problems facing our tenants. It is critical we step back now and then and re-examine our motives and what it is we want to accomplish in order to ensure that quality of life exists for everyone living in social housing."

"As a manager working for many years in the field of social housing," said Denis Luneau, previously manager of many different departments for the City of Drummondville and more recently manager of Quebec City's municipal housing office, "I have been confronted many times by the requirements my colleagues have to face in doing their work. Social housing administrators must follow management guides, regulations, standards, budgets. In short, they are confronted with administrative realities, which means the quality of their work will, for the most part, be evaluated on the basis of their capacity to administer a budget properly."

The different people who are responsible for the work of social housing administrators must ensure that budgetary limits are respected, that the housing stock maintains its value and integrity, and that beneficiaries provide their fair share of effort — in short, that all the rules of the game are strictly followed. "But," said Luneau, "it is not always easy, given daily responsibilities, to keep in mind that the primary concern of all social housing practitioners is to ensure that the beneficiaries have a better quality of life."

Luneau reminded delegates that major investments made by the different governments during the past 20 years in the area of social housing were designed to help an economically disadvantaged clientele have access to adequate and affordable housing. "But wasn't this support also meant to ensure minimum housing conditions so these needy households could integrate themselves socially and develop in dignity?"

During the past few years, Quebec City's municipal housing office has attempted to integrate this basic dimension into various facets of its administration, namely, to involve clients in initiatives designed to improve the quality of their lives and environment. Some of the solutions are already bearing fruit and will produce tangible benefits at the community level during the next few years, said Luneau.

Since the opening of the first buildings administered by the office in 1970, building maintenance has been under the responsibility of municipal employees. This system, which provided obvious benefits in terms of administrative control and efficiency when the office only administered a small number of housing projects, has proved increasingly deficient. Apparently, two things have occurred over the years: some buildings have rapidly deteriorated, and residents seem less willing to co-operate with the office in maintaining the buildings.

"It is a given that when you have a variety of race or ethnic groups living in a single community, you are going to run into difficulties. Different people see things from different perspectives."

"The primary concern of all social housing practitioners is to ensure that the beneficiaries have a better quality of life."

After a pilot experiment in 1985, the decision was made to transfer the maintenance of most of the city's buildings to the tenants themselves. In some cases, said Luneau, individuals were chosen to act as resident janitors; in other cases, an agreement was concluded with the tenant association, which was charged with selecting and remunerating an individual. The results proved positive, both with respect to the physical aspect and community life. The quality of maintenance improved very quickly, as well as the degree of co-operation among the residents and their willingness to solve maintenance problems.

In addition, this new system has also led to the development of mutual aid networks revolving around the resident janitor.

This approach was first applied to buildings for retired people, as it was felt this was the easiest place to initiate the experiment. Later, it was extended to small, family housing. The city intends to extend it gradually to larger complexes, said Luneau.

At the outset, the office granted the responsibility for the implementation of this network to community service organizations. "This meant that qualified social practitioners were responsible for developing the approach, selecting resident janitors, discussing the conditions with tenant associations, and maintaining daily contact with all the participants, for whom they help answer questions, receive feedback and, if necessary, discuss appropriate action — all while providing them with the tools available at the office (educational materials, information manuals, equipment, training, etc.)."

The city's municipal housing office also transferred responsibility for security in the buildings to community service organizations, so that the staff in charge of patrolling and monitoring the buildings can be supervised and guided in their work. Also, a project is currently being developed for young residents in the housing projects to participate in the patrols with designated patrollers. These patrollers will be showing them the positive side of this work and its necessity for maintaining the quality of life of the residents, said Luneau. As part of a project supported by community service organizations and the security service, another group of young people were involved in a button contest in which young residents suggested drawings designed to promote the quality of their environment.

During the past few years, the office also developed another initiative designed to get the tenants involved in the improvement of their building. This initiative involved subsidizing the purchase of flowers for flowerbeds or balconies. Positive results were achieved in some of the housing projects, "where only a few years ago the poor quality of the environment offered a desolate sight."

Retired people, who represent 50 per cent of the office's clientele, must receive more attention from the administrators. Thus, a pilot project to establish a welcoming committee in one of the buildings was developed by the department's social practitioners. It is designed to help integrate new tenants by making them feel more secure, letting them know the availability of neighbourhood services, and offering the support of residents and representatives of their tenant association. "Since the need for better security is one of the major concerns of people who apply for social housing," said Luneau, "it is easy to understand that the creation of these welcoming committees received a lot of support from the residents. After readjusting our procedures and objectives, this approach will gradually be extended to housing complexes designed for families."

Luneau stressed in his concluding remarks that true involvement from the tenants in the decision-making process and the maintenance of their own buildings, coupled with adequate support for their initiatives by the housing department, is key to preserving housing and creating a pleasant environment. It is up to society at large to support in principle this concept, he said, because "problems that are specific to any clientele residing in large housing projects become a societal matter. They are no longer specific to social housing ghettoes."

In her speech, Mary Tate, director of support services for the Ontario Ministry of Housing (which has a mandate to deal with issues relating to improving landlord-tenant relationships, access to services, and the quality of life for tenants in social housing), discussed a number of embryonic ideas geared to improving the quality of life for social housing tenants. These ideas, said Tate, are the result of discussions held with tenants, managers, and support agencies over the last several years.

According to Tate, the Ontario Housing Corporation owns 84,000 housing units managed by 58 local housing authorities. To date, most of the work of the Tenant Support Services Branch has been geared to the housing authority system, although links are currently being formed between it and Ontario's large non-profit sector. Although a great deal of this work focuses on ways to make changes in existing social housing communities, Tate believes much of it can be usefully applied to establishing new communities in the non-profit sector.

Two major trends have influenced the direction the branch has been taking in its work: the increasing diversity of the tenant population in social housing; and the real or perceived loss of safety and security. In terms of tenant diversity, said Tate, a fairly straightforward client group (families with children and senior citizens) is giving way to a more complex and dynamic group from a variety of racial and ethnic origins as well as those having special needs. Increased crime, vandalism, and threat have created the feeling that security and safety in social housing has been compromised. "Sometimes," said Tate, "these fears are drug-related. But in many cases, drugs are not an issue: female tenants feel unsafe; seniors [feel] vulnerable and lonely."

In dealing with issues of community life, Tate said that managers within the system were asked to take a broader view of property management — building communities as well as managing buildings. "We talked about the responsibility of social housing managers as being part of the housing management function; being concerned about race relations, human rights, safety, and community programs. And we began to develop a series of programs in all of these areas. We also said that partnership with tenants is essential for improved quality of life, and we encouraged housing managers to begin meeting with tenants."

While all of these things certainly make a visible improvement in the quality of life of tenants, said Tate, something far less tangible and more difficult to define is really at the heart of the issue. "A sense of community, a sense of belonging, a sense that your neighbours care about you and you care about your neighbours." Thus, while the group is continuing to develop programs and initiatives targeted at defined subject areas, it is now beginning to consider what can be done to promote the building of safe, caring, and supportive communities.

"Problems specific to any client group residing in large housing projects become a societal matter. They are no longer specific to social housing ghettoes."

"We often find there is someone in charge of social work and race relations and someone else in charge of property management, and never the twain shall meet."

The group has identified three keys to creating a climate where this kind of community can be developed. "The first," said Tate, "is a fundamental shift in the traditional approach to property management. Good building maintenance is still important, but we have to start thinking about other things as well. Tenants often feel that housing managers just do not care. They talk about things such as garbage, derelict cars, elevators that do not work, and repairs that are not done. It is difficult for people to take pride in their community if they feel the community itself is not cared for."

Another recurring concern in terms of property management, said Tate, is the lack of tenant control in the process. "People feel they have no input into or control over what goes on in their communities."

As an example, Tate said that a major landscaping project undertaken in one social housing community was viewed by the housing authority as a source of great improvement. Unfortunately, the authority neglected to inform the community of the project. "One day, the bulldozers came in and started tearing up the landscaping, and the tenants had no idea what was going on. Their concern was for their children in the face of this kind of heavy equipment in their communities. The tenants rightfully felt they had not been treated with any sort of respect and dignity in the process." Despite the story's happy ending, said Tate — together, the tenants organized a tenant-run recreation program in an adjacent park to look after the children while the reconstruction went on — "there was no need for the lack of trust and miscommunication that had occurred."

A less dramatic example, said Tate, is the story of a tenant who pointed to her unit and said, 'You know, there used to be a really beautiful tree in front of my apartment. It was one of the things that I liked best about living here. One morning I woke up, and they were chopping it down.' Although the authority no doubt had good reason for having the tree removed, said Tate, "the point is that the tree was a part of the tenant's living environment. It really contributed to how she felt about living there. And somebody was taking it away without even telling her."

This kind of lack of control, said Tate, makes tenants feel they have no input into the community in which they live. "It is difficult for people to get involved and work in their communities when they feel that, no matter what they do, somebody else is going to make the decisions."

Another key to exemplary property management, said Tate, is getting all agencies involved to share a concern for the quality of life of social housing tenants. "We often find there is someone in charge of social work and race relations and someone else in charge of property management, and never the twain shall meet. If we are really concerned about quality of life, however, we have to make these kinds of things part of everybody's job. If there is a race relations or safety problem in a particular community, then everybody in that community must be involved in solving it. Quality of life in social housing communities must be everybody's business. If we want to build safe and caring communities, then we have to begin by demonstrating that we, as property managers, really care about these communities."

To do this, said Tate, housing authorities must closely examine their relationships with their property management staff. "These people have very difficult jobs. They need to know they are in a position to find creative, community-generated solutions and that the support will be there when they make mistakes. Team-

building and communication are essential ingredients of good property management."

Tenant participation is the second key to improving the quality of community life in social housing projects, said Tate. "The quality of community life is ultimately determined by the people who live in the community. Caring managers and social workers, nice community policing, and excellent security services can make a real difference to a community, but without tenant participation, the fundamental character of the community will not be altered."

To elicit tenant participation, said Tate, it is important that the skills, abilities, talent, and knowledge of the people who live and work in social housing communities are recognized and used. "It is surprising how successfully this enormous resource can be brought to bear on solving problems just by creating the opportunity."

In one community, said Tate, when the introduction of a number of new garbage bins did not solve a severe littering problem, consultation with the tenants revealed that most people had their kids take out the garbage on their way to school. Because the kids could not reach into the garbage bins, the garbage ended up on the ground. "The people in the community were aware of who took out the garbage and could have helped solve the problem earlier, if only someone had thought to ask."

"Do not expect tenants to get involved because you think they should," Tate cautioned property managers. "Like anyone else, tenants will get involved in things that are important to them and when they think their involvement will have some concrete benefit." To get people involved in anything in the community, she said, their interests and priorities must first be identified. Then, methods should be devised that allow them to do things for themselves. Even then, the relationships will not be perfect.

There are many different kinds of tenant participation, said Tate, but it is important not to concentrate on one to the exclusion of the others. "The tenant situation, or the tenants themselves, will indicate what kind of arrangement will work best for them. It is important to be flexible and not stick determinedly to a path that might not be appropriate for the community."

The third key to improved quality of life is the development of partnerships in the community. "We have to realize that, as property managers, we cannot and should not do it all. There are some services, the provision of which might constitute an invasion of privacy by a landlord, that are better provided by others in the community. Even those services that are our responsibility, such as project security, cannot be accomplished without good links with the police, the municipality, and so on."

While building partnerships with other agencies in the community is extremely important, it is one of the most difficult things to do well, Tate said. "The major hurdles to creating successful partnerships are the identification of common goals and the understanding and acceptance of the often different objectives of others. Until you can overcome these obstacles, you will not be able to form working partnerships in the community." Workshops are one way of establishing common ground between agencies and enabling them to understand one another's point of view.

In conclusion, Tate called for local solutions to the quality of life issue. "Programs, initiatives, processes, and priorities will really depend on local tenant and community needs." Regardless of the issues involved and within the framework of those local solutions, three things will make the process work: excellence in

"Quality of community life is ultimately determined by the people living in the community. Caring managers, nice community policing, and excellent security services can make a real difference, but without tenant participation, the fundamental character of the community will not be altered."

Question and Answer Period

Q: The New Brunswick Housing Task Force, of which I was a member, listened to people all over the province: people who were living in social housing and people who weren't; and people who wouldn't or who had been there and left because of feelings of powerlessness, fear, insecurity, and hopelessness engendered by that type of situation where others think you can't do anything for yourself. I would like to reinforce the approach that Mary has outlined here — more involvement, more responsibility, more control.

Q: I am surprised no one on the panel is from member and tenant management corporations. Our corporation (Centretown Citizens of Ottawa Corporation) owns 700 units and 30 properties in the downtown area. Although we have staff, our tenants and members are our board and policy-makers; they tell us what to do. This system works quite well for us. All the points that Mary brought up are valid. I applaud the idea that good management of the physical plan is of prime importance. Nothing else will work if people don't feel that they live in a clean, safe environment where things get fixed when they are broken. One of the things I would like the Ministry of Housing to consider is changing the name of their local branches to something other than 'housing authority'.

Q: Are you a housing authority and you ask the tenants to manage the properties, or are you more like a co-operative?

A: We are a private non-profit corporation set up much like a citizen's group, where some of the citizens are the tenants. We are not a housing authority.

property management (which includes creating a climate that encourages property management personnel to devise innovative solutions to specific problems); partnerships with tenants based on common goals, mutual respect, and recognition of each other's roles and responsibilities; and community partnerships based on common objectives and a mutual path.

Q: I assume you are suggesting that public housing could use the same model?

A: Absolutely, it works for us.

Q: I work in tenant relations with Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, and I want to reaffirm a lot of things Mary has said. We have been fairly successful with many of our tenants and tenant associations. We have adapted or are in the process of adapting a family violence protocol or policy. With regard to your property managers, have you been able to bring them around? That is, I come from a social work background, whereas most of the property managers are from financial backgrounds. Sometimes I think never the twain shall meet. Have you been successful in this respect?

Tate: We have some truly wonderful property managers and housing authority managers around the province, and I think some of them have made initiatives and steps that go even far beyond the kinds of things I have described. Many of them have made a real effort in all sorts of different kinds of ways.

When I first started this job, we often had discussions around the province about whether we should do this, or just do bricks and mortar, or do other things. We often wondered about the appropriate roles and responsibilities of social housing landlords. These were very useful discussions. There is widespread recognition that social housing management is more than just managing buildings and that managers have a very important role to play in quality-of-life issues. Where to draw the line and what kinds of things are appropriate for housing managers to do and what services are really best provided by someone else is something we have struggled with. In terms of non-housing services, I personally believe it is extremely important that housing agencies don't try to provide those services; there are people who can do them better.

Generally speaking, it is broadly recognized that social housing managers are very concerned about quality of life. But some of our managers feel they don't quite know how to deal with some of the issues that arise. Housing for psychiatrically handicapped persons and the impact of that on communities, for example, is one issue many housing managers are struggling with. And what about the development of community partnerships and better linkages with mental health agencies, local psychiatric hospitals, and all of those kinds of things. How do we do it? What skills do we need? How do we train our people?

Q: In New York City, a survey was done recently showing that 85 per cent of people charged with crimes were found to be under the influence of cocaine. But the drug network is going into small-town America as well. New York City is some 350 miles south of here. I am wondering if this kind of phenomenon is starting to trickle down to the metropolitan cities of Canada.

We are particularly concerned about Montreal becoming the receiving point for all kinds of social problems. The institutions are closing down, and the homeless in Quebec are coming to Montreal; people with AIDS are coming to Montreal. When I see the dramatic figures from New York City — only six or seven hours' drive from here — I wonder what this means in terms of our whole social environment?

In Montreal, there are places in public housing where people are afraid to go, and this is a new phenomenon. There are race problems in Montreal as well, not necessarily in public housing. There are drug problems in Montreal, but again not of the same acuteness that appears to be happening in American cities. But I am wondering if, in three, four, five years from now, we are going to have on our heads the dramatic overtones that seem to be occurring to the south of us.

Rice: I would be more interested in getting some response from the audience because I want to find out what the situation is as you perceive it here. There are just a matter of miles that separate the two countries, and in terms of the problems in New York City this could be an overnight problem for Canadians. As I already stated, it is just a matter of time before you folks are going to be dealing with a major drug problem — if you are not already doing so presently.

Tate: In some of our larger housing authorities, drug-related activities are creating severe negative impacts on the communities. In response, we are developing what we call a comprehensive drug strategy, which deals with both enforcement and landlord sanctions — all kinds of things — but also the community response. We are looking at some anti-drug strategies, including the need for local solutions, tenant involvement, and active partnerships in the community. Unless you are able to get people to act in numbers large enough (where they feel they can overcome some of the fear), then the citizens believe it is virtually impossible, even with all the law enforcement in the world, to deal with the negative effect from drugs. Better relationships with the police, evicting people involved in criminal activities, improved security and entry systems, better lighting: All these kinds of things are extremely important. But equally, and maybe even more important, is finding ways for the community to feel safe enough to respond to situations.

A: The Ottawa-Carleton Regional Housing Authority has 8,500 units with a large family portfolio. We have experienced some significant drug problems. It is important to develop a strategy for dealing with those kinds of problems, starting at the board level. It is our policy to evict if there is a problem, and we have the support of the tenants. We have also formed a security committee of tenants, who work with the police. We have to be extremely tough about the drug problem, and we would rather be criticized as a board for evicting someone because we were concerned about a drug problem than not dealing with it at all.

Rice: Are you able to evict without a conviction?

A: We go to court with our eviction notices, and we have been relatively successful in court in getting evictions.

Rice: No, I mean a criminal conviction in terms of drugs.

A: You can take it to the landlord/tenant court, or whatever you call it. You can then go to criminal court where a person is convicted of a criminal act. Or if there are reasonable grounds to believe that something is happening, we have recourse to take civil action under the Landlord and Tenant Act.

A: We had a very interesting situation where we have had the civil court uphold the situation and the criminal court saying, "Well, there weren't enough grounds to convict the person." We still followed through with the eviction, which I believe the tenants appreciated.

ACCESS TO HOUSING: WHO IS RESPONSIBLE? VIEWS FROM DIFFERENT SECTORS

ACCÈS AU LOGEMENT: QUI EST RESPONSABLE? LE POINT DE VUE DE DIVERS SECTEURS

Bryan Davie (Chair)
Deputy Minister
Ontario Ministry of Housing

Pierre Paquette
President, Conseil central de Montréal
Confédération des syndicats nationaux

Michael Geller
President, Michael Geller & Associates, Vancouver
and President
Urban Development Institute of Canada

Bill Bosworth
Executive Officer, Homes First Society
Toronto

This plenary presents the views of the labour, religion, and business communities, with the intent of identifying their various responsibilities in the area of housing accessibility.

Cette séance plénière présente les points de vue des syndicats, des communautés religieuses et du monde des affaires dans le but de déterminer leurs responsabilités respectives en matière d'accès au logement.

Apart from what affects negotiations in collective agreements in the construction sector, what would a labour representative have to say about housing?, asked Pierre Paquette in his opening remarks to delegates attending the plenary on *Access to Housing: Views From Different Sectors*. Surprisingly, many things can be said, he quipped. Paquette, president of the Conseil central de Montréal of the Confédération des syndicats nationaux, explained labour movement's interest in housing: "Without pretending to have all the answers, the labour movement has always been interested in the problems of lodging. Its main reason for existence is not solely to negotiate working conditions but also to

help attain economic security for its members and the public in general."

Le Conseil central de Montréal, along with 75,000 members from the Confédération des syndicats nationaux in the metropolitan area, has excellent reasons for interfering in the question of lodging, said Paquette. Almost 70 per cent of its members are renters, which, he pointed out, is high considering that 75 per cent within the entire Montreal population are renters.

Montreal's housing situation, in general, has deteriorated over the years. According to Paquette, the proportion of lodgers who devote 25 per cent or less of their income to housing has diminished from 62 per cent to 52 per cent between 1981 and 1986. And the percentage of renters who devote more than 30 per cent of their salaries toward lodging ranges from 30 per cent to 39 per cent for the same period.

Two factors explain the impoverishment of Montreal's renters. Salaries and social assistance have not increased as fast as inflation, whereas rents have increased more rapidly than the average cost of a house. Yet, said Paquette, even house prices have escalated, and this means that even first-time homebuyers are being penalized. "The high cost of housing is virtually closing all access for renters to become owners. In addition, through rent increases, renters are being further penalized."

"Municipal governments must abandon their existing policies in favour of policies that are based on the rights of renters."

Who is responsible for easing the housing situation, thereby increasing its accessibility? For Paquette, the answer can be found by examining the history of housing assistance in Canada since the Second World War. Since this time, there has been increasing intervention in the area of housing and urban development, at first the federal, then provincial and municipal levels.

With respect to the Province of Quebec in general and Montreal in particular, said Paquette, "municipal action has even surpassed the province's." Many of the housing programs implemented at the end of the 1960s involved the restoration of lodgings, the general intent being to stimulate the private market.

"We must negate the inefficiency of this private market and answer to certain social needs," said Paquette, who pointed out that, in 1981, Quebec accounted for 40,000 lodgings HLM and 5,000 co-operative units, out of a total 2,000,000 lodgings. "This is very few."

Due to the economic crisis of the early 1980s, Paquette said that governments became "orientated toward a new liberalism," which meant the eventual withdrawal of direct provincial government intervention in housing and cutbacks in social programs. Specifically, Paquette pointed out that since Bourassa's government assumed power, its main goal has been to initiate issued programs from Ottawa. The Ministry of Housing has been abolished and subsidies to non-profit and co-operative groups have been cut.

Ultimately, the by-product of all this, Paquette said, has been a drastic reduction in the annual production of social housing — from close to 6,000 units in 1981 to just under 4,000 in 1987.

"To justify the cutbacks in the production of social housing, the Government of Quebec boasts it is helping the less fortunate. In reality, however, the government wants only to decrease accessibility to social housing, of which a clear signal is the attempt to raise selection criteria," said Paquette. An example of this is the rent supplement program, "which allows the deprived renter to pay the same rent as in public rentals, but in private lodgings, the government assumes the difference." In Quebec, this program has become the main avenue for public housing

assistance, with the attribution of over 2,000 units to private owners. Concluded Paquette, "This program is better aid to vacant apartment owners than to a renter in need."

It is the labour movement's contention that the three levels of government are responsible for assuring each and every Canadian can access quality housing at an affordable price. Consequently, said Paquette, the federal, provincial, and municipal governments "must abandon their existing administrative policies in favour of policies that are based on the rights of renters. Housing rights necessitate a policy of development for social housing centred on procedures that permit the renters to control their lodgings."

One such policy that should be promoted, said Paquette, concerns rent control.

"The main arguments brought forth by those opposing rent control are of two types. On one hand, opponents of rent control say that such controls would bring forth a halt in the construction of local housing and [promote] shortages and the black market. They say the free market favours construction competition and creates, therefore, a rebalancing of rentals, with certain ups and downs. Another argument posited by these opponents is that we must never apply more social politics on the owners as we do on the others."

"We cannot cling to such falsehoods," said Paquette. "First of all, rent controls don't stop construction of local housing; it's more a combination of other factors, such as the general slowdown of the economy, the rise in interest rates, and the decrease in the standard of living."

Prices should lower with increased competition, which, said Paquette, has been the case historically, the beginning of the 1970s being the exception. "When there are two many apartments on the market, construction slows down and the vacancy rate decreases."

Furthermore, he pointed out, it is only because owners profit from a free market system that tenants are abused — hence, the rationale for rent controls.

Paquette also reminded delegates that rent control in Quebec was implemented at a time when "the percentage of income allowed for rent increased historically in Quebec with the rise in the standard of living." He said, "At the end of the 19th century, it was suggested to labourers that they should allocate 14 to 16 per cent of their salaries to rent. During the 1920s, this percentage increased to 20 per cent; since 1960, this percentage has increased to 28 per cent and, eventually, 30 per cent."

Without rent control, Paquette said it is probable the increase in salaries would have somehow ended up by increasing the owners' profits.

For this reason, the Confédération des syndicats nationaux contends that rent controls must be maintained. Paquette's organization is also pushing for the enactment of such items as collective negotiation forms, which would help tenants defend themselves as a group.

But having conceded that such controls by themselves are insufficient, Paquette went on to discuss the merits of a market system containing a social sector that is composed of co-operative and non-profit organisations. "Such organizations are apt to create an effective competition in the traditional private sector and may influence the market by offering affordable housing. Obviously, at the present time, this type of housing represents only a small section of our residential stock here in Quebec." (Apparently, in 1986, co-operative housing represented only about 2.7 per cent of all housing groups in the province.)

"It is the State's responsibility to set the rules. The decision-maker should be the provincial government. But every housing policy must depend on a local body to manage collective property."

The main advantages of co-operative housing are: the ability to decrease the number of lodgings in the speculative market; availability of good apartments at reasonable rates; and possession by tenants. In older city sections, such as Pointe St. Charles in Montreal, this type of housing helps to maintain the traditional resident population.

"Co-operative housing answers our needs by patronizing those who are in need socially and economically," said Paquette.

Paquette concluded his remarks with a general statement of the importance and need for co-operative and social housing in today's economic environment where "the fact remains that we house ourselves according to what we can afford. Recognizing this realistic state of affairs in the country, the Conseil centrale de Montréal has defended a certain number of property access measures based on the idea that the state must help, without favouring speculation and without overshadowing the rights of the tenant."

Who is responsible for increasing accessibility to housing? Speaking for the labour movement, Paquette said, "We all have a collective and shared responsibility. It is the resonsibility of the state to set the rules because of its mandate toward collectivity. In the context of our Canadian Constitution, the decision-maker should be the provincial government. But every housing policy must depend on a local body to manage occupants and collective property. Housing should be seen first of all as a right before being seen as a public investment."

"By applying new ways of thinking and new approaches to problem-solving, the private sector can help to increase affordable housing."

In agreement with Paquette, Michael Geller, president of Michael Geller & Associates, Vancouver, and also president of the Urban Development Institute of Canada, said that while everyone is responsible, the solutions to the problem are much more difficult to achieve. "However, by applying new ways of thinking and new approaches to problem-solving, the private sector can help to increase opportunities for affordable housing across Canada. For, when it comes to trying to solve some of Canada's housing problems, we are all family."

The public, private, and government sectors can work together toward solving the common housing problems; they no longer have to or need to be diametrically opposed, said Geller. "Indeed, developers are no longer cigar-smoking, money-hungry profiteers who don't care about the environment, who don't care about communities, and who are motivated solely by greed and a desire to own 12-cylinder cars. The line between the public and private sectors will become even more blurred. And it will be shown that there is great benefit in switching from the public to private sectors and vice versa from time to time."

To examine some of the ways in which the private sector can improve accessibility in housing, Geller used Vancouver as an example. B.C., which has the most diverse demographic profile in terms of age, race, and incomes in Canada, is experiencing housing problems that have yet to appear anywhere in Canada, even in Toronto. These problems are manifested by a major westward migration from other provinces — nearly 40,000 people each year. In the past year alone, more than 4,800 Quebecers and 26,000 people from Ontario moved to B.C. Also, B.C. is drawing more than 300 old-age pensioners from across Canada every month — three times higher than any other province.

This influx has collided with the second highest prices in Canada, said Geller. The average Vancouver house now costs

more than $250,000, and the rental vacancy rate has been stuck near zero for more than a year.

"On the west coast, we are grappling with a housing crisis of historic proportions, and the private sector has prepared some equally strong responses."

B.C. is the only place in Canada where senior homeowners are putting up their own cash — not the taxpayers — to build co-operative homes that can never be sold for a profit. B.C. is the only place in Canada where senior homeowners can draw tax-free cash from their homes without selling them and receive a guaranteed income for life, with no government aid. "While some of you may be nervous about this, B.C. is also the only province that will privatize public housing this year," said Geller. The new crown corporation plans to joint venture with the private sector, building affordable housing on Crown land.

The recent provincial budget included a number of initiatives to encourage the development of affordable housing. One of the most notable is the incentive to municipalities to approve affordable housing units. "It takes the form of one of the most effective incentives I know — a bribe! In this case, up to $2,500 for every unit approved within a prescribed time-frame."

Vancouver is the only city in Canada where private homeowners have created 26,000 bootleg units of low-income rental housing — more than double all government programs — "and become criminals doing it!"

Geller pointed out emphatically: "Private-sector responses to affordable housing emerging in B.C. are not based on altruism. They are routed in necessity, and many are coming from the bottom up. More importantly, this is a small country, and many could be coming to you next."

What is private-sector's role in affordable housing? The "private sector" is a broad term comprising four primary components: the financial community; the land developer; the residential builder and developer; and the private homeowner. Each of these has the clout to make a difference.

Quoting from Michael Jackson's song 'Take a Look in the Mirror and Make a Change', Geller made the point that financial institutions should take a look in that mirror and realize that reverse annuity mortgages for seniors, longer mortgage amortization terms for young homebuyers, and funding for non-profit housing are not radical concepts. "Lenders should shake loose from some of the hoary cobwebs that restrict mortgage lending in general."

Canada should also look to other locales for solutions. For example, Geller said that in Great Britain, the majority of homes are purchased with 100 per cent financing, and yet defaults are rare. In B.C., Canada's only reverse annuity mortgage program is putting cash into seniors' pockets without threatening their homes. Taking a page from the British and British Columbia examples, Geller challenged the Canadian lending institutions "to take a gamble on young and old Canadians."

Some lenders are tapping into the government's mortage-backed security pool, which swelled by more than $335,000,000 million in the first quarter of this year alone, to back social housing projects. Why not do the same for private non-profit housing?, asked Geller.

One of the keys to solving the problem of affordable housing is to increase supply. In recent years, many private builders and developers have moved away from building affordable housing because of higher land costs and an unwritten ratio between the cost of land and the cost of construction. Opportunities also

"When it comes to solving some of Canada's housing problems, we are all family."

lie for private developers to joint venture with community-based not-for-profit groups. Although similar ventures are occurring with turnkey co-ops and municipal non-profits, most of these, said Geller, are being developed under government programs. "There is much that non-profits and private builders could do, especially with the support of an understanding lender, without public subsidies."

Opportunities also exist for joint ventures with governments. For example, the City of Vancouver has devised a housing initiative — referred to by that city's mayor as "privately built housing with a social conscience" — to encourage an increased supply of affordable rental housing on municipally owned lands.

Although private-sector responsibility for the provision of affordable housing rests primarily with the building, developing, and financial communities, Geller reminded delegates not to negate the responsibility that private citizens also have. He said, "Collectively known as the general public, this component exerts the greatest power."

Again using Vancouver to illustrate this statement, Geller informed the audience that many private homeowners have created affordable housing units in their basements and attics.

On the down side, he said, "Unfortunately, the same people are blocking rezonings to permit smaller houses or multiple building forms in their neighbourhoods. My favourite story is the lady who wanted to buy one of my apartments, but they were all sold. She lamented, 'For the past 20 years, I have been blocking rezonings, and now that my husband and I are ready for an apartment, we can't find one'."

"There is much that non-profits and private builders could do ... without public subsidies."

A message must be sent to private citizens to be more flexible concerning residential zoning, said Geller.

Finally, we must all send a message to the municipal politicians: "Don't allow those who are currently well-housed to make all the decisions. They have a vested interest. We should instead be focusing on where today's taxpayers will live when they get older, where their children or parents will live, or where those less fortunate are going to live. We need to make decisions based on a long-term strategy, not on the timing of the next election."

The religious and local communities also have a role to play in the provision of affordable, accessible housing, but it's a role that has left Bill Bosworth wondering about whether he should be critical or full of praise. "This non-profit sector has been working very hard to develop housing to respond to the needs of low-income people, but there's a fear it [as with other non-profit groups] has been letting the government off the hook," remarked Bosworth, executive officer of Toronto's Homes First Society.

In his introductory remarks on the church's and community's role in the housing field, Bosworth reminded the audience of the work being undertaken by the likes of people such as Jim Green and Sister Monique Picard. "You hear from Jim Green of the kind of power that comes from a few people in a low-income area who are determined to preserve that community against all newcomers. You heard from Sister Monique of the power that comes from the religious drive to help and care for the victims of our society."

Yet, stressed Bosworth, despite the best efforts of these types of communities to protect themselves, "they are probably losing." And this is doubly unfortunate because across this

country, throughout every major urban centre, the dynamics of a small community group trying to protect its own is being repeated — everywhere where "the need to develop, to put up monster houses or white-painted townhouses, has overtaken community after community of stable, low-income working families."

In the face of pressing and immediate need, said Bosworth, it has been the churches and community-based organizations that have always responded. In fact, Canada's entire health care and educational systems is due, in part, to the responses made by community groups, which were often church-based. The same can be said about the beginnings of the welfare system.

Although this type of work is admirable, Bosworth said the failure lies in our inability "to make the leap from seeing people, including the homeless, being provided with services offered by churches and social service agencies to recognizing what services are needed to prevent them from getting into the situation in the first place." The upshot is that we are now stuck with a hostile system because we failed to develop permanent housing "with the same amount of money and the same effort." Bosworth dubs this the self-fulfilling prophesy: "We've created a system where the system itself turns people into what the system believes it should be dealing with."

"We've created a system where the system itself turns people into what the system believes it should be dealing with."

An example of such a backward system is the alcohol treatment program, where Bosworth said the people first enter a detoxication program for 28 days, then enter a three-month program, then live six months in a halfway house, then move to a three-quarterway house, etc. At the end of the cycle, the person finds him/herself back at the detox centre because there's nowhere to live.

"In a sense," said Bosworth, "the churches, community groups, and social service agencies have all responded to these varying social needs by creating something that perpetuates that high degree of need."

Bosworth pointed out that, on the other side of the coin, in the pursuit of justice, the churches and community groups critisize government for not providing housing and oppose development programs for their injustices to the rental system. "But this hasn't been terribly effective [as a strategy] either. If we look at the net results of all the efforts of the last 30 years, no net change in the income distribution in this country has occurred. So all this effort has just been to shuffle people around," said Bosworth.

The outcome is that we're losing.

Having said this, Bosworth directed the delegates to re-examine the old-age philosophy that the private sector could provide housing for most people and that social, public, or subsidized housing would exist to provide the safety net for those people who were unable to be used by the private sector. "During the last 50 years, we've failed to realize that the basic assumption is incorrect. The private market will never supply housing to at least 40 per cent of population in a way that gives them security of tenure, stability of community, and all of the other things we feel the market has successfully achieved for the other 60 per cent."

Our strategy has failed to work. Bosworth pointed out that today one in six welfare recipients lives in private-sector housing, a sad fact that illustrates subsidized housing is not being provided for the very people for whom the system was supposed to help.

The first step to rectifying the problem is to recognize that the existing approach to housing low-income Canadians has not

worked. "Part of what keeps us from seeing this is the apparent successes we've had," said Bosworth. "When we look at places like the Downtown Eastside, when we look at the programs the religious communities operate for keeping people off the streets, when we look at the success of the private market in providing housing for 60 per cent of the population, we are blinded to the fact that the system has actually failed to do its job."

Although there is "blinding despair" in all this, said Bosworth, one can find hope. He reminded us of the stories related by Jim Green, Sister Monique Picard, and Enrique Ortiz, stories that have expressed hope in the possibility of preserving neighbourhoods, developing housing, creating real communities.

What is it that prevents us from taking those obvious successes and replacing the current system, which has failed to provide housing for all? The examples are all there, the hope is there. For Bosworth, the solution lies in first acknowledging that the dual system of a private market and social services sector is a failure. We must take a hard look at the successes and start building those into a new system. And we must, said Bosworth, let go of the economic racism that has governed our attitudes. "We have to start seeing ourselves — those of us who are nicely housed, those of us who are in the churches and community groups — as part of the problem and look at how the way we do business keeps people in their place."

Bosworth challenged the delegates to throw out the traditional practice of refusing people access to a housing unit because of some preconceived targeting plan. "We have to start seeing the case of the woman on welfare who is refused access by a non-profit to a market rental unit as an opportunity to rethink what we're doing."

"In a sense, the churches, community groups, and social service agencies have responded to varying social needs by creating something that perpetuates that high degree of need."

ACCESS TO HOUSING: WHO IS RESPONSIBLE? MUNICIPAL, PROVINCIAL, AND NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

ACCÈS AU LOGEMENT: QUI EST RESPONSABLE? PERSPECTIVES MUNICIPALE/ PROVINCIALE/NATIONALE

Maja Prentice (Chair)
President, Peel Non-Profit Housing Corporation
Brampton

John Gardiner
Member of the Executive Committee
City of Montreal

The Honourable Peter Trites
Minister of Housing
Province of New Brunswick

Humphrey Carver
Member of the Order of Canada
and former Chair
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Advisory Group

The views of the municipal, provincial, and federal levels of government in terms of access to housing are presented.

Les points de vue des gouvernements municipaux, provinciaux et fédéral sur la question de l'accès au logement sont présentés.

Increasing the accessibility of housing to more citizens in the lower-income groups and ensuring the continued renewal of Canada's built environment are not primarily the responsibility of one sector or one level of government. Despite their varying

perspectives, the three speakers in this session, *Access to Housing: Who Is Responsible? Municipal, Provincial, and National Perspectives,* relayed a similar message. All three levels of government must share in the responsibility of meeting the country's housing needs.

"Municipalities must take the initiative. They must make their needs known. They must learn to favour a social mixture."

Given the present climate — the increasing housing needs of Canadians, issues of affordability, and the current disinvestment by the federal government — "municipalities can and must take a more proactive role," said John Gardiner, a member of the executive committee of the City of Montreal. Montreal is one municipality that has done just that.

As a municipality that has shown concern for the housing needs of its citizens, Montreal has, in later years, taken even more of a proactive stance, due in part to the strength of the Montreal Citizens Movement, which took 55 of the 58 seats on city council in the November 1986 municipal election. Originally formed in 1974, housing has always been one of the MCM's major preoccupations.

Some of the lessons and actions taken in Montreal can perhaps be used elsewhere, he added, before elaborating at length on recent initiatives undertaken by the municipality.

"If there are important similarities between municipalities, there are also differences, those being quite extensive." According to Gardiner, Montreal differs from many Quebec municipalities and also from other Canadian municipalities in terms of its rental housing situation.

One-third of the rentals in Montreal were built before 1946, one-third between 1946 and 1960, and one-third since 1960. In terms of physical form and methods of occupation, the majority of these homes are small frame or brick structures, with one part often occupied by the owner. Only eight per cent of these units are single-family residences. Indeed, 75 per cent of Montreal's population are tenants; of this percentage, 35 per cent have children. Moreover, said Gardiner, 90 per cent of the immigrants to the Province of Quebec establish themselves in metropolitan regions, including Montreal.

Montreal also has other factors with which to contend. Unlike other municipalities in the province, the conversion of rental units to condominiums is forbidden.

But, Gardiner pointed out, similarities among Quebec's municipalities can also be found. "At least in the larger cities, there is a deterioration when it comes to rentals. In Montreal, 124,615 of the 450,000 people who reside there spend 30 per cent or more of their income on rent; 63,440 spend 50 per cent or more on rent.

It is becoming increasingly difficult for first-time homebuyers to have ready access to reasonably priced properties. "And the federal sales tax should worsen the situation."

More and more families favour living in the suburbs because they are looking for a more healthy environment and [want to] own a bungalow, garden, and two cars. "This pursuit of the North American dream entails a spoilage of land, of energy, and of time."

There is an increase in demand for rentals with services due to de-institutionalization and the increasing senior population. "Cutbacks to our hospitals and institutions have contributed directly to the increase in the homeless population — at least 88 per cent," said Gardiner.

Not helping the increasing housing problems faced by many municipalities is the direct "stagnation or retirement of

government assistance programs, an action that has accentuated the problems found at the municipal level."

In response to decreasing federal and provincial government support in the area of housing, the City of Montreal decided to implement its own strategy as a means of combatting the housing problem. Its housing statement, published in 1989, contains very implicit and clear goals. These goals, said Gardiner, are fourfold: to develop a coherent and global housing strategy; to clearly distinguish the municipal government's role from that of the industry or non-profit sector; to obtain a consensus for action among the many actors in the field of housing; and to put the city in a pro-active, leadership stance.

Two objectives are outlined in the housing statement. They are as follows:

- a larger number of Montreal households should have access to individual and collective homeownership; and
- housing in Montreal should be affordable and of good quality.

"Keeping housing relatively affordable and improving what we have are the best ways of meeting the needs of much of our population. This constitutes the primary thrust of our housing statement," said Gardiner.

Five strategies articulate the means by which the City of Montreal will meet its two objectives.

To encourage individual and collective homeownership (the first strategy), the city wants to include the co-op and non-profit sectors both in homeownership and social housing initiatives. Other plans include establishing a municipal tax credit for first-time buyers and developing a purchase/rehab program for co-ops and a municipal co-op program in the $15,000 to $30,000 range.

To support the growth of the housing stock, the city wants to promote new housing construction, which it views as "one means of responding to new needs [of the people] and of relieving pressure on the existing stock." Other plans related to this second strategy involve the reorganization of paramunicipals; and the evaluation of land-banking, mixed partnerships, tax credits, and compensation funds. Promoting new housing construction in the city is also seen as "an explicit means of reducing the exodus to the suburbs and maintaining a viable tax base," said Gardiner.

Increasing the social housing stock is the third strategy of the City of Montreal. According to Gardiner, the municipality intends to create 40,000 additional units, including traditional public housing and up to 2,000 non-profit rooming houses, in 10 years.

The fourth objective is to preserve and improve existing housing. Since 1969, $123 million has been invested by Montreal, compared to $89 million by Ottawa and Quebec combined, said Gardiner. "In 1989 alone, 23,055 dwellings and 2,342 rooms were renovated at a tune of $10.7 million." Close to 17,000 complaints of health and safety violations in 4,400 buildings were issued last year. About 60,000 units are still in need of major repair, making it essential that renovation subsidies be applied so as to avoid massive rent increases and further hardship to the low-income population. "Needless to say, the elimination of the federal portion of the rental rehab subsidy dramatically affects Montreal. Nine million dollars per year ($45-50 million in five years) of federal money is the targeted money we need." In the long

"Programs [should be set up in such a way that they] permit municipalities to plan regularly and in the long term. Municipalities need flexibility to adjust programs to realities."

term, the city hopes that preventive maintenance is the answer to its rehabilitation woes. It plans to publicize the names of repeat offenders and award certificates of quality.

The city's fifth strategy, which concerns the promotion of measures to maintain residents in their community, includes two components. These are to create and maintain quality residential environments in the urbain context and to minimize the dislocation of vulnerable populations caused by policies or programs or by the lack of appropriate housing in neighbourhoods. With respect to the latter, the city subsidizes the cost of relocating tenants during renovations and hires a local resource group to liaise with the tenants.

"This policy [two objectives, five strategies, 37 recommendations] represents a considerable investment for a municipality. Over the next five years, we estimate the costs to the municipality alone will approach $180 million — more than two per cent of our budget annually," said Gardiner.

Such investment is tremendous for any municipality to bear, considering the fragile fiscal foundations of the municipal world, which "cannot support redistributed programs because the landed tax is an essential tax. The provincial and federal governments tax revenues, and they are in charge of redistributing them according to needs."

Yet, Gardiner reminded delegates the needs of the citizens must be served. "We must house the wrecked; we must provide certain services. We cannot remain indifferent."

"Municipalities must become and must be treated as equal partners. They must be part of the federal and provincial housing agreements."

In the face of the current climate "where the deterioration of Canada's rental situation continues and where governments have elected to reduce their housing programs," Gardiner stressed that municipalities have an even more important role to play in the future. "We must spend a great deal and take the initiative. We must make our needs know. We must learn to favour a social mixture. We need a level of stabilization in our programs that will permit us to plan at regular intervals and in the long term. We need flexibility to adjust programs to realities. Offering this flexibility are block grants, where funds are linked to clear, measurable objectives."

"Municipalities," said Gardiner, "must become and must be treated as equal partners. We must be part of the federal and provincial housing agreements. Municipalities must take a firm stand in favour of incorporating social rentals and rentals for persons needing special services; we must assume a leadership stance to counter the NIMBY phenomenon. We must also assure that programs are adequate, that these rentals blend well with the residential sectors, and that the required services are put in place for those difficult to house."

Because municipalities know more about the housing needs of their citizens and deal with the realities of housing on a daily basis, Gardiner said the provincial and federal governments must agree to support the efforts of municipalities. And, holding Montreal up as an example of a municipality with vision, Gardiner called on municipalities themselves to become committed to increased spending and "getting the most from each of the actors on the housing scene." He also said that the local level of government must develop expertise, define needs, acknowledge needs, take initiatives, invest, and become strong advocates on behalf of the housing needs of their own citizens.

In turn, the provinces and federal government "must learn to listen and act in full co-operation with municipalities and community groups. To date, inconsistency and hesitation, disruption and interruption have been too prevalent."

The bringing together at this conference of all of the housing actors exemplifies a new spirit of co-operation in the country, said Peter Trites, Minister of Housing for the Province of New Brunswick, in his introductory remarks. It is significant, he said, that at this conference "each of us are listening to the others, showing some respect for their points of view, and looking for ways to continue to work together."

As with Gardiner, Trites used his particular experience "as the conductor of an orchestra, namely, the New Brunswick Housing Corporation", to put forward a provincial perspective on who is ultimately responsible for housing. He said, "I see my job as one of helping develop goals, policy, directions, and priorities. In addition to trying to address the housing problems we face as a province, I also have a political responsibility. While I agree that politicians must have a political will to do things that are not always popular in their community or province because of such things such as NIMBY, there is also that political responsibility to address the concerns of the electorate we represent. For that reason, it becomes difficult for us to justify in the minds of some people the rationale behind a particular decision."

Holding up the way that the Province of New Brunswick does things, Trites emphasized (in much the same way as Gardiner did) how one level of government can take the initiative and do things well. According to Trites, his own government not only stresses the economic development potential in order to get people to work but also remembers the social values it represents. The government has made it a point to draft policy, then put all contentious or major issues to the public test through hearings, "where virtually all of the interest groups get to express themselves."

As a result, "we've shown in certain ways we're not above withdrawing things we've proposed and reintroducing a better packages as a result of those hearings. That's what I believe is necessary within the housing sector. I have a responsibility, but one of my major responsibilities is sharing the responsibility with other partners in the housing sector."

The importance of establishing a dialogue, a consultation process with the other partners — non-profit groups, contractors, developers, tenants, and other involved parties — cannot be underestimated, said Trites. But consultation must not be meaningless either: "It's got to be more than listening. You've got to show some reponse; you've got to be able to be flexible and react to what you're hearing because the planners in the central or regional offices don't have the answers. They cannot comprehend the problems that people in my province or your province are living every day." And to Trites, it's the people who can provide the best ideas and suggestions.

In addition to being willing to listen, adjust, and react, Trites said it's also extremely important to communicate all decisions, and the rationale behind those decisions, to the various partners and groups. This type of communication "builds a relationship and credibility among the various partners" — including the federal partner.

Citing New Brunswick's approach to the recent withdrawal of Rental RRAP as an example of good communication practice, Trites explained that, while the province didn't agree with the federal government's decision to remove the program from its funding roster, it intends to continue communications with the federal minister "and relay how we can help him get that program back again."

"Consultation has to be more than listening. You've got to show some response; you've got to be flexible and react to what you're hearing."

"Each and every one of us, no matter what sector we represent, has something to offer. We simply have to look for ways to meld that type of commitment."

Explained Trites: "That's communiction, that's dialogue, and that's co-operation. And that's what's got to happen [in all housing matters]. We value our federal/provincial relationships."

In terms of municipal involvement, the municipalities (i.e., corporations, non-profits) deliver the federal/provincial programs. Trites expressed the need to convince municipal politicians to address and confront the NIMBY syndrome, and "accept the responsibility they have for housing their citizens."

As an ongoing effort to improve the province's relationship with the municipalities, Trites would like to see the eventual development of a three-way partnership.

He would also like to see partnerships formed with the people being served by the housing assistance programs because, "very often, the people we serve don't have a voice." As one step toward fulfilling this objective, Trites has supported the development of housing coalitions. To date, there are 13 coalitions representing various geographical areas and communities throughout the province.

Stressing the importance of facilitating such development, nevertheless, Trites also emphasized the importance of not exerting control over that development. The New Brunswick Housing Corporation provides core funding to these groups "to the tune of $50,000," but doesn't take an active part in their development. "It's important that we're not seen as a control mechanism, that they have a level of independence allowing them to express their concerns," said Trites. "I recognize that at times they're going to become a very strong thorn in my side, but it's a thorn I have to accept if we're going to develop the type of policies that will best address the needs of our people."

The province meets regularly with groups from the non-profit sector, the private sector, and the poor sector since a provincial non-profit organization doesn't exist in New Brunswick. Trites' ministry even decided to sponsor a provincial conference as a means of getting a provincial non-profit group organized to the extent where it can effectively communicate among its own members and with the provincial corporation.

Not forgetting the private sector in the provision of affordable housing, Trites explained the relative importance of communicating with representative groups from this bailiwick, including the provincial home builders' association, developers, and money lenders — who are all essential partners in the development of a housing policy and in arriving at new co-operative joint ventures with other housing sectors.

Another important sector that should be consulted, said Trites, is the interest groups. These run the gamut from the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association to the mulitude of other, smaller groups of the housing community.

"Each and every one of us, no matter which sector we represent, has something to offer," said Trites. "We simply have to look for ways to meld that type of commitment."

Using the provincially appointed task force as an example of co-operation and commitment, Trites explained that the task force became "a real educational tool." It helped to highlight the very real housing problems faced by those of us who don't live in three-bedroom bungalows and don't drive the main roads. As a result of the task force's work, 50 recommendations were written and eight provincial programs were added to the programs already implemented under the federal/provincial agreements.

An important element of the task force was that it represented the kind of cross-section of people to which Trites was referring to earlier. It comprised 10 people who represented the housing

coalition, the aboriginal people's council, the building sector, the landlord sector, the social sector, the financial sector, and the rural sector.

"We came up with a group of people who represented the interests of all New Brunswickers. These 10 people, who met for the first time together, toured the province; they listened, they spent their mornings visiting people who were living in atrocious housing conditions or in public housing or in units provided under the various programs. They met with people privately so they could express themselves without media presence. They organized public hearings at night. In a month and a half, they had communicated and consulted with over 300 individuals and groups around the province. They spent the summer trying to draft a report." In addition to the obvious outcome, a side benefit of this was the formation of a partnership. "These 10 people started as strangers and ended up writing a report that was unanimous."

No matter what sector we all represent, Trites emphasized the importance of communicating with each other.

"CMHC must continue to be involved deeply as a financial agency [and] as a builder in order to show that the environment we make around ourselves can be beautiful and stimulating rather than mean and ugly and intimidating to the human spirit."

"Scientists tell us the universe started with a BIG BANG. And now some of them are trying to tell us what happened in the first three minutes of creation. January 1946 was a bit like that: After the BIG BANG of the war, everything that happened that month was new. Everything you did started from scratch. Every action was seminal. Until that moment, nobody had ever heard of CMHC. And what was I doing in January 1946? I was sitting in a small, back room on Bloor Street in Toronto, with a modest grant from the feds, the province, and the city, trying to figure out the future housing needs of Toronto."

With these opening remarks, Humphrey Carver, a member of the Order of Canada and former chair of CMHC's advisory group, presented his dissertation on the federal government's historical and current roles in housing and urban development.

Looking back on those early days, Carver noted that, from his own standpoint, the most useful avenues for Part V funding from CMHC were projects of the early years: graduate courses in urban and regional planning, which were started in five universities; the start-up of the Canadian Housing Design Council (now defunct); and the series of urban renewal studies, which began in 1955 and "succeeded in starting urban renewal as a continuing process in the management of a growing and everchanging city."

In its 44-year history, said Carver, CMHC has had three quite distinct and separate roles, embodied in a single corporation with a president and a board of directors. Debatable is whether these three roles are compatible.

In its first role as a financial agency, CMHC has been handed the assignment of keeping Canada's stock of housing, in every city, "growing at the front-end and in decent condition at the back-end. The population is very mobile and keeps migrating from one end of the country to the other, as the honey pots of employment shift. The federal financial agency is supposed to keep an eye on this."

Its second role has been as a builder, which, to Carver's recollection, has happened only under three circumstances: to supply workers' housing in wartime; to house families of veterans returning after war; and to lead into the social housing phase. "The federal agency was a builder in these three successive housing crises."

In its third role, CMHC has been an institution concerned with the advancement of the quality and character of Canada's urban environment, an institution supported by funds under Part V of the National Housing Act.

"The three roles have been packaged together in one piece of legislation and performed by one agency — CMHC. Yet, the roles are quite different," said Carver, "each requiring a different kind of management." As a builder, CMHC has been required to show action-oriented, enterprising leadership; as a government financial agency, CMHC has been linked with the more cautious and prudent style of a bank bureaucracy; and in the third role, CMHC has been more like a cultural institution needing the leadership of imaginative and creative people who have a sense of past and future history.

Through the years, the three roles have had their ups and downs, primarily because of the differing outlooks of presidents and the shifts and thrusts of policy. For example, said Carver, the first president fitted splendidly into roles one and two, as he was, by experience, a financial manager. He also made CMHC into a first-class builder, building houses for the families of veterans. By profession, the second president was a university professor, so he understood very well all the possibilities inherent under role three, which defined CMHC as a cultural institution. He, too, wanted CMHC to be the best builder in the land; it was his intellectual ambition.

Given the shifting priorities and capabilities of its presidents and of policy direction, is more to be gained by packaging these roles together? Or is more to be gained by arranging them as a group of agencies, separated but related? These questions must now be asked, said Carver, who went on to muse about the problems of yesteryear and today. "After the BIG BANG and until I retired 20 years later, it was a time of beginnings. The things to be done then now seem so simplistic: Get social housing going, get planning started, get houses designed better. Now the problems are more complex and interwoven. You who deal with housing affairs are far more sophisticated and knowledgeable."

"I see the present through the eyes of a grandfather. I see my children raise their children. All choose to live near the centres of big cities. I see the cities being turned inside-out and upside-down as new generations take over the whole stock of housing in new, different ways. Suburbs or the central core — the houses cost the same (which is too much). But they are separated by an hour's drive on a dangerous, furious freeway that pollutes the earth's atmosphere. [In the end,] there may be a crisis of survival, not just a housing crisis," said Carver.

Urban renewal 25 years ago was conceived as a kindly, charismatic program for cleaning up the inside edges of cities and improving the housing of the poor. Now, said Carver, perhaps we are entering a new era after an upheaval and transformation.

"Now the whole insides of cities have to be redesigned for people who have lifestyles very different from the original inhabitants, most of whom didn't even have cars. Now the streets are swamped with cars; the children's skipping space has gone."

In Carver's day, he said life was more simplistic. There was rich/poor mum and dad/the kids. Today, cities are far more complex. They have to be designed to accommodate a richer mixture of cultures, family economies, tastes, occupations, and expectations. "What a wonderful creative prospect!"

In closing, Carver expressed the hope that CMHC will continue to be involved deeply as a financial agency, as a builder — "in

order to show that the environment we make around ourselves can be beautiful and stimulating rather than mean and ugly and intimidating to the human spirit'' — and as a great institution that leads the way into the next decade.

IDENTIFYING WAYS TO EASE THE HOUSING CRUNCH

À LA RECHERCHE DE MOYENS POUR ATTÉNUER LA CRISE DU LOGEMENT

Despite fewer federal dollars, backward municipal zoning legislation, and a rapidly deteriorating public housing stock, solutions to the current housing crunch are within our grasp. In his luncheon address, Alan Redway called on the combined efforts of all housing advocates to identify those innovative solutions.

Malgré une baisse des fonds accordés par le gouvernement fédéral, des règlements de zonage municipaux désuets et un parc de logements publics en voie de détérioration, les solutions à la crise actuelle du logement sont à portée de main. Dans le cadre de ce dîner de travail, M. Alan Redway a demandé à tous les défenseurs du logement de joindre leurs efforts en vue de trouver des solutions innovatrices.

Alan Redway
Minister of State (Housing)/Ministre d'État (Habitation)

Canada's limited fiscal dollars have to be faced, commented Alan Redway, Minister of State (Housing), when providing reasons for the federal government's decision to eliminate Rental RRAP and return funding of co-operative housing to the original commitment given for its five-year experimental ILM program. A few years ago, 18 cents out of every dollar the federal government received in revenue went to pay interest on the national debt; in 1988, it was 31 cents; in 1989, it was 35 cents.

"It doesn't take a genius to know that we can't go on this way. If this situation is allowed to continue, it won't be long before all of our social programs will be in jeopardy," commented Redway, who added that all government departments were required to reduce expenditures. With respect to the component of the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program directed to rental properties, there was no doubt that in some communities the program helped a great number of core needy who spend more than 30 per cent of their income on housing. However, said Redway, because of the nature of the program and the need to ensure participation by landlords, it was possible for people not in core need to benefit.

Having said this, the Minister proceeded to remind delegates of all the good social housing programs still in place: non-profit, rent supplement, rural and native, urban native, homeowner RRAP, disabled RRAP, and a reduced co-op housing program. In addition, the total social housing budget for 1989 has been increased by $100 million. And, with the help of the provinces and territories, another 20,000 units will be added to the current rent geared-to-income housing stock. A further 25,000 core need

households will receive assistance as well. Redway also reminded delegates that the federal government presently assists, and will continue to assist, some 6,000 households across the country.

To meet the ongoing and future needs of Canadians, "we have to be innovative and make the most of the resources available at all levels of government." In particular, Redway pointed out that in the "hot spots" of the housing market — Greater Vancouver, Greater Toronto, and a number of communities in Southern Ontario, where extraordinary economic and population growth are occurring and, hence, where housing demand has sent prices skyrocketing — "every effort has to be made to identify surplus federal land that can be used for housing." This one approach can help, Redway said, to increase the supply of serviced land in these locations.

On one such piece of land, the Downsview property in Metro Toronto, the federal government is taking 135 acres of surplus federal land from the Armed Forces base and developing it to provide housing for between 10,000 and 12,000 people. At least 25 per cent of the units will be earmarked for those in core need. With the help of the City of North York, the remainder will be developed as housing for other clienteles, which will create a well-balanced community with a range of housing types and income levels.

"This project, by itself, is not going to solve the housing problems in Toronto, or elsewhere, but it is a useful first step. I have asked CMHC to examine all surplus federal lands in tight housing markets to see if they could be used to increase the housing supply in the face of rising demand," said Redway.

Other ways to make housing more affordable are also being explored by the federal government, including modifying the CMHC's mortgage insurance program to require reduced downpayments.

But the housing problem cannot be solved by the federal government alone, said Redway. "It will take the combined efforts of us all, and in many cases, it is the municipal government that is the real decision-maker. If I had the money, and I could spend millions of dollars in an effort to create affordable housing, it could all be wiped out in one stroke of the pen by a municipal zoning by-law that creates a community only for the very wealthy or reduces densities, thereby increasing housing costs."

In his comments about the NIMBY syndrome that many municipalities face, Redway remarked, "It is difficult for municipal politicians and officials to face angry taxpayers who insist they are not going to have smaller, more affordable housing in their neighbourhoods. Solving that problem is not only going to require innovative legislation but also a change in our social values. We have to change 'not in my back yard' to 'yes, in my back yard'. It's a formidable challenge, but one we have to tackle together."

One way of helping municipalities implement less stringent legislation and ease the buildings approvals process could very well be the tripartitite initiative, which is being funded by CMHC. The objective of this regulatory reform project, involving CHRA, FCM, and CHBA, is to identify regulations, laws, and by-laws that unduly restrict the creation of more affordable housing, such as the Charlie home or a home converted to hold more than one unit.

The federal government is also hoping that its other tripartite venture involving different players — federal, provincial, and municipal tripartite committees — will increase co-operation and

"We have to be innovative and make the most of the resources available at all levels of government."

maximize the use of combined resources. Such a committee has already been established in Metropolitan Toronto, and plans are under way to set up similar committees in Vancouver, Winnipeg, and St. John's.

"Because federal government programs must be national ones, they often do not appear to respond to the very different regional conditions across the country. Perhaps through these tripartite committees, we can do a better job of responding to those differences," said Redway.

In addition to the specific housing affordability needs of many Canadians, another, equally significant problem involving the state of the housing stock is rearing its ugly head. Many of the country's public housing projects are growing older and are expected to deteriorate rapidly over the next few years. The regeneration of these projects must begin soon, said Redway.

The Minister concluded his speech by calling on all the actors in housing to work together: "Money is tight. But, in spite of this, you and I must not throw up our hands in despair. We have a duty to help Canadians get affordable housing."

"Solving the NIMBY problem is not only going to require innovative legislation but also a change in social values."